



## **Boplats 96**

*Swedish preparatory group  
for the United Nations Conference  
on Human Settlements (Habitat II)  
in Istanbul, 1996*

# SHAPING SUSTAINABLE HOMES IN AN URBANIZING WORLD

## Swedish National Report for Habitat II



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Swedish preparatory group  
for the United Nations Conference  
on Human Settlements (Habitat II)  
in Istanbul, 1996

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## SHAPING SUSTAINABLE HOMES IN AN URBANIZING WORLD

### The Swedish National Report for Habitat II

The Swedish National Report gives a background to Swedish efforts in the areas to be covered by the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) in Istanbul in 1996. The Report provides arguments from Swedish experience that will be defended in the further Conference preparations and in the Conference itself. Further documentation on Swedish experience may be found in two supplementary reports - "Environment, homes and people in Sweden at the end of the 20th century" from the Swedish National Board of Housing, Building and Planning (Boverket) and "Towards an Urban World - Urbanization and Development Assistance" - from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), which will be available together with the Swedish National Report. The Report includes a presentation of the 10 best practices that the Swedish Preparatory Group decided to nominate in the Swedish preparatory work. Attached to the Report is also digitalized information about human settlements development in Sweden in the format of a specially produced CD Rom.

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"There were connections, there might even be some signs of hope. Once people had been starving in these small cabins and shacks, now being transformed into cultural reserves... Giving evidence that misery could be defeated. It had not even really called for overwhelming sacrifices. What was called for was really another way of viewing the world, exchanging mercy and charity for justice. Of course he did not know if this experience could be applied in the world at large. Still he had the feeling of having received a secret message to pin on his wall, a promise."

Per Anders Fogelström in "A city transformed"

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## FOREWORD

The UN Conference 1996 on Human Settlements (Habitat II), to be held in Istanbul in June 1996, will deal with two major issues of equal importance to our common future; adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements in an urbanising world.

The needs of the homeless and of those people in urban areas to whom the right to a home is at stake will be one top priority of the conference. The challenges for urban areas facing fundamental economic, social and environmental problems that are the results of a growing world population and an unprecedented migration and urban birth growth will be the other top priority. The need for finding practical strategies for action is common to both themes if we are to reverse the present situation of an unsustainable development in growing cities and urban areas marked by large pockets of poverty and social unrest.

Adequate shelter and sustainable urban development can be attained only through concerted efforts by all parties concerned. All levels of government, the business sector, the academic community, individuals as well as public and private institutions, each need to make substantial contributions to protect, improve and develop sustainable homes in a rapidly urbanizing world. The viability and creativity of civil society and the adequate functioning of the market economy will be decisive. National governments must enable local action.

The 1995 report of the UN Commission on Global Governance "Our Global Neighbourhood", reflects how population, consumption, technology, development, and the environment are interlinked through complex relationships that bear closely on human welfare in the global neighbourhood. The city is a vital subject of all levels of governance. The Commission stresses that Global Governance has an important contribution to make in tackling causes of excessively rapid population growth and urbanisation, and in strengthening regional, state, and local capacities to cope with their consequences. The world must find ways to ensure that people living in poverty can raise their living standards and consumption levels without endangering environmental safety. Technologies that use fewer resources, such as energy-saving technologies must be preferred. In order to keep the global resource use within prudent limits, while enabling people living in poverty to raise their living standards, affluent societies must change their consumption patterns.

### *Previous Habitat commitments*

The 1976 UN Conference on Human Settlements in Vancouver (Habitat), adopted a number of recommendations on national measures relating to the built environment, to urban planning, infrastructure and social services, land, public participation, institutions and administration. It was the UN Commission on Human Settlements which took the initiative leading to the UN International

Year of the Homeless in 1987, which resulted in the adoption by the General Assembly of the Global Strategy for Shelter to the year 2000. The strategy affirms the duty of all countries to make secure provision for the housing needs of their populations.

The Vancouver Declaration on Human Settlements, worked out during the 1976 Conference in Vancouver, will serve as a basis for the commitments at Habitat II. Fundamental to the Vancouver Declaration was the 1966 Economic Covenant, recognizing the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing and to the continuous improvement of living conditions.

In Sweden, being a country with a very diversified market economy and with a comparatively extensive production of services under public auspices, national obligations with regard to shelter and human settlements are part of the general obligations of the Welfare State. The 1982 Swedish Constitution Act lays down that the personal, economic and cultural well-being of the individual must be fundamental objectives of public activity. In particular, it shall be incumbent on the public sector to secure the right to work, housing and education and to promote social care and security and a good living environment. The public sector must endeavour to make the ideas of democracy guiding principles for all sectors of society. The public sector shall ensure men and women of equal rights and shall safeguard the private life and family life of the individual.

#### *Lessons from recent UN Conferences*

Democracy and the recognition of human rights are a prerequisite for any sustainable development. This was recognized by the world community at the Vienna Conference on Human Rights. The security of people and of their homes are imperilled by the culture of violence that has infected many societies, with a consequent loss of respect for human life. Dealing with the political, economic, social, or other causes of violence and protecting human rights, are vital objectives of governance that determine the conditions for adequate shelter and for the sustainable development of human settlements.

The Rio Conference raised awareness about global environmental threats and the realization that these threats can only be countered by tackling environmental and developmental questions conjointly. The greenhouse effect, the depletion of the ozone layer, the loss of biodiversity, the problems of arid zones, the population explosion, the reliability of supply - none of these crucial issues can be solved without integrated approaches. Urban lifestyles, the patterns of production and consumption and the very organisation of cities and urban areas need to be redressed and adjusted to environmental imperatives. New resource- and energy saving technologies, must be massively introduced. They will be adopted by people living in poverty only if they give hope for a better life and are attractive to everyone in the local and national context.

The Cairo Conference showed that practically the entire growth of the earth's population from today's 5,7 billion to over 10 billion by the middle of the next century will take place in cities and urban areas, especially in cities in developing countries. This sharp increase in urban population and the strains it will have on present infrastructures prompts the urgency of strengthening local governments, of comprehensive management and planning strategies and for increased international co-operation.

More than one hundred million people in the world are presently regarded as homeless. Far too many live in cities in Western Europe, in the United States and in cities of the industrialized world at large. In many cities in all parts of the world there are large islands of extreme poverty, unemployment and absence of hope. At the same time the same cities contain archipelagos of extreme wealth and affluence. As concluded at the Copenhagen Social Summit such extreme inequalities will lead to absolutely unacceptable levels of criminality, drug abuse, violence and anarchy. To avoid an unmanageable social crisis in the cities of the world, poverty reduction and the promotion of more equity must be given top priority on the urban management agenda.

The Beijing Conference concerned the full empowerment of women. The importance of society's formal and informal power structures for equality between women and men seem to be generally accepted. Equality objectives cannot be met in isolation. Women are agents for change. The empowerment of women requires of men a change in present attitudes and values. Only with full equality between the sexes can the conditions be created for children to grow up in healthy and sustainable environments. For women living in poor districts in cities, survival strategies must be formulated to cope with wretched housing, unhealthy surroundings, lack of water and sanitation, low standards of safety and security, substance abuse and crime and difficulties in obtaining an income and being able to dispose of it freely.

#### *The Swedish National Report*

The Habitat II Conference of 1996 will focus on the living and working conditions of all humankind. World-wide there is enormously much remaining to be done to safeguard adequate shelter for all, and to pursue the sustainable development of cities and towns and of villages and dispersed settlements in urban as well as rural areas. The creativity of and the level of interaction between political institutions, people, public administration, universities, the business sector, private and public organisations, and generally between the political system and the market place, will be decisive for progress.

Swedish efforts to give all households a real possibility to afford a suitable and comfortable dwelling in a secure neighbourhood have generally been very successful, but at the cost of subsidy levels that do not seem sustainable. The massive and also very successful ten year investment program of the 1960s and 70s, aiming at rapidly accommodating the housing needs for one quarter of Swedish households, did sometimes result in monotonous living environments



that do not satisfy social and cultural needs. Recognizing the positive and lasting effects of the Swedish program for industrialized building, it is important to share experience on failures and on measures to counteract and prevent such failures. Energy conservation in buildings has been very successful, while health problems have increased that to some extent seem to be related to production technology, the use of new and untested materials and to insufficient ventilation.

The Swedish experience of local government and of efforts to manage urban development in settlements of varying sizes during a long period of massive urbanisation and economic transformation, also provides some useful lessons. The city models now being discussed in Sweden, the transformation of infrastructure and transport systems, the efforts to introduce sustainable technologies for human settlements (with Agenda 21 as an important source of inspiration), and experience from community work and the mobilisation of local resources in the campaign "All of Sweden shall live", could be useful in the sharing of experience on sustainable urban development.

Sweden wishes to play an active and dynamic role in international co-operation efforts to develop sustainable homes in an urbanizing world. The Swedish National Report provides a national example of how it was possible for a poor country to develop into a welfare state with housing for all over the past century. In a global perspective human settlements in Sweden at a first glance could seem to be without real problems. The Report attempts to prove that there might be several worthwhile lessons both for good and for bad to learn from the Swedish housing, building and planning experience.

The structure of this Report, follows the structure agreed upon by the UN Preparatory Committee for Habitat II. The Swedish preparatory process and the involvement of stake-holders representing different Habitat aspects are presented in Part A: Introduction. A summary of recent domestic practices is presented in Part B: Assessment of the Swedish Experience. The priority issues for improving housing conditions and for the development of sustainable human settlements in Sweden, are presented in Part C: Challenges to the year 2000. Finally, in Part D, International Co-operation, the focus is on international co-operation and solidarity issues that have been identified in the national and international preparatory process for Habitat II.

## **Part A: INTRODUCTION**

### **1. THE SWEDISH PREPARATORY GROUP BOPLATS 96**

#### **1.1 Terms of reference**

The Swedish Preparatory Group for the Habitat II Conference was established through a Resolution adopted at a Cabinet Meeting of the Government on 24th June 1993. The Decision states that Sweden should play an active and dynamic role in the preparations for the 1996 World Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II). The Preparatory Group, named as Boplats 96, has since its establishment been headed at Ministerial level; first by the Minister charged with reporting on planning, land use and human settlements Ms Görel Thurdin, and after the formation of the present Swedish Government by the Minister of Housing and Energy Mr Jörgen Andersson. According to its mandate, Boplats 96 is to frame Swedish positions on the specific issues for the Habitat II Conference, to be informed of and to contribute to the preparatory process and to the Conference, and generally to procure expert knowledge and documentation relevant to the preparations from special advisers and experts.

The Preparatory Group includes some 25 representatives of all Parties represented in Parliament, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and other Ministries concerned, relevant national authorities and organisations, among them the Swedish Association of Local Authorities, non-governmental organisations and of the academic world. Close coordination was established from the outset with the work of the National Committee for the 1994 UN Conference on Population and Development, the Preparatory Committee for the 1995 Conference on Women, the National Committee for Preparations for the 1995 Social Summit and other work related to questions concerning human settlements, e.g. within the UN Commission for Sustainable Development and with the National Committee for the celebration of UN 50 years.

#### **1.2 Elements in the work program for Boplats 96**

By November 1995, Boplats 96 had met eight times concentrating its efforts on:

- Creating a broad based framework in Sweden for the identification of goals and objectives in the areas to be covered by Habitat.
- Activating international resources and networks.
- The preparation of the Swedish National Report to Habitat II, including the definition of major issues on which Sweden should focus on nationally and in the international preparatory work.
- The nomination of Swedish best practices and the production of a special CD ROM to accompany the National Report.

- Deliberations on the further process of operations involving the scientific world, municipalities, the business community and the public at large in the preparations for Habitat II.
- Initiatives nationally and internationally that can highlight the issues to be covered at Habitat II, including the arrangement of seminars and workshops and the formulation of standard rules for the right to one's home.

The work of the Group has been carried out under six program areas:

- Sweden's National Report to Habitat II, including the production of a CD-Rom.
- Issues related to urbanization, Local Agenda 21 and popular involvement in Sweden.
- The right to one's home, property right issues, in particular gender equality and institutional aspects.
- Use of new technology and involvement of the business sector.
- Strategies for development assistance.
- Urban development in an eco-cycles adapted industrial society.

The preparatory work took as its point of departure in particular the Global Strategy for Shelter to the year 2000 and the commitments made at Habitat I and at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. In June 1994, the Government commissioned the Swedish National Board of Housing, Building and Planning to prepare the background documentation on issues to be highlighted in the Swedish National Report. Similarly, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida, prepared a Report on Urban Development Assistance as background for part D of the Swedish National Report. The Swedish Association of Local Authorities has inquired with all 288 Swedish Municipalities regarding the establishment of Local Agenda 21 committed in UNCED in 1992, and as a source for identifying representative best practices from Sweden in the Habitat II preparations.

An issue of fundamental importance to the Swedish Preparatory Group is the right to one's home. This has been stressed on various occasions by the preparatory group and the Swedish Government which already in 1993 made available targeted funds for international work in this area to the Habitat II Secretariat. A special sub-group was set up by Boplats 96 with the task of analysing practical means to ensure internationally accepted standard rules on tenancy and tenure protection (the right to one's home). A draft proposal for such Standard Rules was handed over to the Secretary General for Habitat II by the Swedish Minister of Housing and Energy on 28 August 1995.

Virtually all of Sweden's 288 municipalities are presently engaged in the formulation of local Agenda 21s. The Government has funded the formulation of guidelines for this work through a booklet and a CD-ROM, which have been used as inputs for this National Report and for the documentation of best practices in fields like housing modernization and renewal, physical planning, ecological living and building, waste management, sewage, energy supply, transportation, etc.

In line with this work has been the involvement of Swedish popular movements in the preparatory process for Habitat II. A representative of the Tenants Union of Sweden is a member of the Swedish Preparatory Group as well as a representative for people with disabilities. Contacts are also maintained with other NGOs, CBOs and networks, including Swedish youth movements. To further these contacts, special electronic information boards have been accessible to organizations and all municipalities, with updated information on issues relating to the preparations for Habitat II.

## **2. INTERDEPENDENCE WITH OTHER UN WORLD CONFERENCES**

From the outset, the Swedish Preparatory Group established working relationships with the preparatory committees responsible for the Swedish preparations for the 1994 UN Population Conference, the 1995 World Women Conference and the 1995 Social Summit. To this end, on 2 November 1994, a joint thematic colloquy was held in Stockholm under the auspices of Boplats 96. More than 100 participants representing political life and NGOs took stock of the different preparatory processes, also identifying the links between the conferences and the UNCED-follow-up. The discussions were structured in such way that cross sectoral issues should be identified. The findings of the Round table were documented in the report "Focus on Humankind", handed over to Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Secretary General of the UN during his official visit to Sweden on 12 January, 1995.

On 29 September 1995, a special NGO-day was arranged, with the participation of more than 100 representatives of most Swedish non-governmental organisations and networks. The presentations related to housing and human rights, introduced by the UN Special Rapporteur, Chief Justice Rajindar Sachar, and on ways and means for NGOs to contribute to the Habitat II preparations. Participants discussed in groups and on the basis of a draft of the present National Report. Various proposals made were retained by Boplats 96 and are now reflected in this Report.

Similarly, during the official visit of Dr Wally N'Dow to Sweden in August 1995, a public hearing was arranged with municipal representatives to discuss the contents of the Swedish National Report.

## **3. INTERNATIONAL PREPARATORY WORK**

Sweden assumed its corresponding share in the international preparatory work for Habitat II and has participated actively in various meetings convened by UNCHS, the European Union, OECD, the Economic Commission for Europe, the Council of Europe etc. Sweden has also been the host of international events of relevance to the preparatory work for Habitat II.

Already in the Spring of 1992, a UN ECE-seminar was arranged in the city of Örebro on sustainable human settlements. The report, contained in the publication "Ecocycles", was presented by H.M. the King of Sweden at the World Urban Forum in Curitiba, Brazil, in June 1992.

In March 1993, Sweden together with the Netherlands and the Habitat-secretariat co-arranged a Seminar on Urban areas, Environment and Energy in the city of Lund. The conclusions of the seminar were retained at PrepCom 1 as an input to the final documents from Habitat II. The seminar was subsequently followed-up through international seminars on the sustainability of cities with the participation of Gaborone, Botswana; Riga, Latvia; Changzhou, Peoples Republic of China and Hanoi, Vietnam. The findings from these seminars were presented by the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences to Dr Wally N'Dow during his official visit to Sweden in August 1995 and will be published in a special edition of the Academy's publication "Ambio" in conjunction with the Istanbul Conference.

In March 1994, a seminar took place in the city of Örnsköldsvik under the auspices of the Council of Europe on the role and representation of women in urban and regional planning. Following up on gender aspects of human settlements, an international workshop on Women's Access, Control and Tenure of Land, Property and Settlement was organized together with the Habitat II Secretariat in October 1995 in the city of Gävle.

In June 1994, an OECD-Sweden work-shop on the Ecological City took place in Stockholm. A Report from that meeting served as a background for a national seminar in November 1995 on research and development challenges related to Urban Management in the Cities of an Eco-cycles adapted Industrial Society under the auspices of Boplats 96, the Swedish Council for Building Research and the Swedish Council for Planning and Coordination of Research.

A number of other projects of relevance for Habitat II have also taken place at the regional and sub-regional level. Work initiated in December 1992 with the other countries of the Baltic Sea Region has resulted in the planning document Vision and strategies for the countries and regions around the Baltic Sea. Thanks to this co-operation, in early 1995 Boplats 96 took the initiative for joint Nordic-Baltic meetings in preparation for Habitat II.

During the Swedish chairmanship of the Committee on Human Settlements of the ECE, Sweden worked actively in the preparation for the ECE regional meeting for Habitat II in September 1994. The joint conclusions of the Swedish and Polish Ministers chairing that meeting, affirmed the importance of Habitat

II, the cross-sectoral nature of the issues to be retained in the preparatory work for the Conference and the importance of ECE co-operation in the preparation for and follow-up of Habitat II.

Sweden participated in the fall of 1994 in the OECD-Australian Conference on Cities and the New Global Economy and in the Asian Conference on Ecotechnology for Sustainable Development. The latter Conference was conducted via Internet, where the opportunities of ecotechnologies were discussed and was concluded with a teleconference between Sweden and the Peoples Republic of China.

At PrepCom 1, Sweden pledged the counter-value of three million Swedish Crowns to the preparatory work of the Habitat II secretariat. The funds were made available as support to women networks in preparation for Habitat II, the exchange of best practice examples and further work on issues related to the rights to property and housing. In kind contributions to the international preparations for the Habitat II Conference amount to another million Swedish Crowns. Together with the regular contribution of Sweden to the UNCHS voluntary Trust Fund of five million Swedish Crowns p.a., this puts Sweden among the major contributors to the conference and its preparations and reflects the importance attached by the Swedish Government to Habitat II.

## **Part B: ASSESSMENT OF THE SWEDISH EXPERIENCE**

### **1. THE BROADER SETTING**

#### **1.1 Geography and economy**

Sweden, with 8,8 million inhabitants and 3,8 million households, is the fifth largest country in Europe, its area covering nearly 450 000 sq. km. At the beginning of this century 70 percent of the population lived in rural areas. Today the country is highly urbanized, 55 percent living in 110 cities or towns with more than 10 000 inhabitants and further 30 percent living in other dense urban settlements with more than 200 inhabitants. Most people live in the southern part of the country and along the Baltic coast. About 30 percent of the population live in the three metropolitan areas of Stockholm, Göteborg and Malmö.

The population in built-up areas around the bigger cities has grown with 0,5 to 1 percent per year over the last 15 years, while areas around smaller cities and towns over the same period has lost on the average 0,3 percent per year. These figures imply that a continued slow pace urbanisation is taking place at a regional scale.

Sweden has roughly 4,2 million dwellings, of which nearly 50 percent are single family homes. Additionally there are 600 000 homes for seasonal and secondary use. The dwelling density is 2,2 persons per dwelling, calculated on permanent dwellings.

Extending over 1 600 km from north to south, the country has a wide variation of different climates. Due to the Atlantic Gulf Stream, climate in Scandinavia is far milder than that of other countries at corresponding latitudes. Forests covers roughly 70 percent of the Swedish land area, farm land covers 6 percent and urban areas only 1 percent.

The end of the cold war has offered opportunities for Sweden to start the re-establishment of pre-war economic and cultural relations with its neighbours east of the Baltic Sea and in Eastern and Central Europe, adding to traditional close relations in the European region with the Nordic Countries and Western Europe. From 1 January 1995 Sweden is a member of the European Union.

Sweden experienced rapid industrialisation and urbanisation from the late 19th century. Through hard work, foresighted political decisions and some luck, poverty was overcome and equally distributed wealth created. The elementary school reforms of the early 19th century, the emergence of a wide span of non-governmental organisations with substantial memberships, and democratisation, supported by reformed government structures, were important components in the transformation of Sweden from one of Europe's poorest countries to one of the wealthiest in the world.

Early industrialisation was based on Swedish natural resources utilized through modern technology and by new business structures developed by open-minded engineers and entrepreneurs, who were given a chance to expand through deregulation of the economy. Many of these early base industries - forestry, mining, steel production and manufacturing - soon became important partners in the regional and global economy.

Today the mechanical engineering industry accounts for nearly half of the industrial production; cars, electrical appliances and communication equipment accounting for half of Swedish export worth. Other important areas for export are related to the medical sector and to the protection and control of the environment. The industrial structure is characterized by large firms, the country having a comparably low share of small firms.

Approximately half of Swedish electricity production is based on hydropower, almost all the rest being based on nuclear power. Sweden is basically self-sufficient in terms of major food products, despite the fact that only four percent of Swedes are depending directly on farming, animal husbandry and forestry.

In recent years Sweden has faced a major recession, international economic turmoil hurting the country more than many comparable countries. The reasons are to be found in a public sector, reaching levels that do not seem sustainable, and in the inflation history of the last decades. Between 1990 and 1994 more than 500 000 people lost their jobs. Economic policy aims at restoring confidence in the Swedish economy, the Government claiming determination to restore public finances, to re-establish a sound economy and to radically increase employment figures. A ceiling will be introduced to control levels of public spending.

Driven by a major devaluation of the Swedish krona, Swedish export industry is now experiencing growth of an almost unprecedented magnitude. In 1994 industrial production increased with 11 percent and exports increased with 14 percent. Employment figures in 1995 are expected to increase with some 85 000 jobs. A structural change is taking place in Swedish economy, the sectors under competition now increasing their share of the economy and preparing further expansion within Sweden. A hundred percent increase in industrial investments is expected over the years 1994, 1995 and 1996. Terms of trade are now showing increasing and stable surplus. The next few years Sweden is expected to manage sizeable down-payments of its international net debts.

The availability of competitive and sustainable energy supply is fundamental to sustainable economic growth. According to a general referendum Swedish nuclear power shall be phased out by the year 2010. In 1994 a Commission was set up, with representatives from all parties in Parliament, to study the transformation of the Swedish energy system. Against the background of the liberalization of the electricity market, the Energy Commission is to make a



Careful analysis of the consequences of increased trade in electricity between Sweden and the European continent. Furthermore, the economic, environmental and energy policy consequences of closing down one or more nuclear reactors during the 1990s shall be analysed. A starting point for work should be the obligations Sweden has taken upon itself in accordance with the UN Convention on Climatic change.

## **1.2 Population**

By the new year of 1995 the Swedish population reached 8 816 000 inhabitants, of which 50,6 percent were females. Elderly people, over 65 years of age, represented the very substantial share of 17,5 percent (1 540 000). Small children under 6 years of age numbered 842 000 (9,6 percent), schoolchildren between 7 and 17 years of age numbered 1 120 000 (12,7 percent) and adolescents between 18 and 24 years of age numbered 798 000 (9,1 percent).

The birth-rate in 1994 was 12,8 per 1000 Swedes to compare with the mortality rate 10,5. The total fertility rate among Swedish women was 1,89.

More than 10 percent of the Swedish population are immigrants, 922 000 of the population being born abroad. Out of the 537 000 foreign citizens quite a few are born in Sweden. During the five first years of the 1990s, 239 000 immigrants entered the country, many of them being refugees seeking asylum. 1992 was a peak year when it comes to reception of refugees in Sweden with 84 000 persons seeking asylum, the vast majority (70 000) from the former Yugoslavia. In 1994 the number of asylum seekers was down at 18 600.

## **1.3 Constitution and legal framework**

Sweden is a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary form of government. At national level it is governed by the parliament (Riksdagen) which enacts laws, decides national taxation and the budget, and by the National Government (Regeringen) which is the initiating, planning, and executive organ of the state. To support the administration there are further a number of central authorities, each responsible for a specific sector of state administration.

At the regional level the country is divided into 24 counties (län) which are headed by county administrative boards (länsstyrelserna), to which are connected representatives of many of the central state authorities. The county administrative boards are the link between National Government and the municipalities (kommunerna). There are also regional bodies elected by the county's inhabitants, county councils (landsting), mainly responsible for public health, primary care and hospitals and some other regionally important matters, such as public transport (as a rule together with the municipalities in the county), culture, tourism and some support of small enterprises.

At the local level, Sweden is divided into 288 municipalities. They are governed by municipal councils, elected by the inhabitants of the municipalities.

The councils establish executive boards and subordinate, politically controlled standing committees to which certain decision-making powers are delegated.

To a high degree the municipalities are independent. Both they and the county councils are subject to the same legal regulations and are granted the right to levy income taxes. Swedish municipalities have a strong freedom to make their own priorities when it comes to budget and other policy matters of importance to the local level. For instance central government funding is generally being provided in a block grant. Compared to many other countries in Europe, public planning in Sweden is not hierarchical but founded on a decentralized dialogue between local government and the state, where most initiative rests with the local level.

The general insurance systems covering health care and unemployment are important features of the Swedish welfare system. The judicial system consists of civil courts and administrative courts as well as of some specialised courts for handling certain laws as the Water law. They include normally three levels with the right to get a case treated up to the second level, while the third level in principle is reserved for test cases or otherwise cases of special public interest.

#### **1.4 Changing conditions for local government**

Local self-government has a very long tradition in Sweden. The number of municipalities in Sweden totalled about 2 500 in the 1862 local government reform. At that time Sweden had about 90 cities. During the decades after the reform, modern Sweden began to take shape. Immediately after the second world war a series of reforms in order to strengthen local government was decided by parliament. In 1952 the number of municipalities was reduced from roughly 2 500 to 1 000, including at that time 133 cities and 88 boroughs.

Due to continuing urbanisation during the 1950s, the number of inhabitants in rural communities fell, resulting in shrinking tax resources and inability to provide acceptable services to remaining inhabitants. The majority in parliament felt that a broader concept of multi-purpose local government would be needed to meet the demands of modern Sweden. Necessary resources for acceptable services could be provided only through the formation of new "super-municipalities". A key concept was that each municipality should form a coherent territory in terms of economic geography. No municipality ought to have fewer than 8 000 inhabitants.

A compulsory municipal boundary reform was completed by January 1974, the number of municipalities being reduced to 278. (A small number have later been partitioned into two or more units). The typical Swedish municipality, outside of the metropolitan areas, now includes both built-up areas of various sizes and rural areas, the center often being a small or medium-sized city surrounded by countryside, sometimes including smaller towns or hamlets.

The current 288 municipalities cover the country's whole territory and have broad responsibilities for community issues such as education, care for the elderly, the planning, maintenance and protection of the physical environment; emergency services, civil defence, transportation and communications; technical services like water, sewage and energy; and recreational and cultural programs. Excluding transfer payments, 50 percent of public consumption at present is channelled through the municipalities, while the share of county councils is 20 percent and the share of the state is 30 percent.

There is every indication that local government in Sweden will continue to play an important role in providing basic economic security and services to their local inhabitants. However local governments today face the necessity of adapting to three major trends in particular: the financial problems of the public sector, internationalization and changing public values and attitudes.

#### *Financial problems of local government*

Local government services expanded dramatically during the 1960s and 1970s, the expansion being financed in part by the growth of the tax base in the new "super-municipalities" that paralleled general economic growth. This trend came to a halt in the 1980s. Local tax increases were sharply limited. Since 1985 state grants have gradually declined in value.

An increasing conflict has occurred in Swedish local governments between escalating demands and limited financial resources. Municipalities and county councils have responded by trying to use their resources more effectively and by implementing general cutbacks. They have also reduced their financial assets, sold some of their tangible assets and especially trimmed their capital spending.

The desire to increase efficiency in local government services includes a trend toward greater application of market-oriented methods. Examples of such methods are the creation of distinctions between purchaser and provider functions, the use of competition and contracting out, and the application of profit-oriented budgeting. A large scale adoption of market models presupposes that local governments will be capable of striking a reasonable balance between the demands of democracy and human quality, the rule of law and economic efficiency.

#### *Internationalization*

Internationalization has far-reaching consequences for Swedish society as a whole and presumably also for Swedish local authorities. The membership in the European Union creates new opportunities for municipalities and county councils. The government has established a co-ordinating committee to prepare matters concerning local and regional administration in the context of the European Union. 12 representatives from Swedish county councils and municipalities are members of the Regional Committee of the European Union.

Given the increasing economic integration in Europe and Swedish dependency on the global economy, there is reason to believe that Swedish municipalities and county councils will become more and more internationally oriented in the future, both in terms of bilateral relationships with foreign counterparts and of exchanges of services and expertise.

### *Changing public values and attitudes*

In recent years social researchers studying shifts in public values over time have singled out two main trends: The first is a movement in which individuals assign higher priorities to such values as life satisfaction and self-fulfilment. This trend leads away from uniformity toward a greater degree of diversity, variety and individualism. The second main trend is a general decline in public confidence in politics and politicians, which seems to be a general phenomenon in the Western world. Several studies also indicate dissatisfaction with opportunities to influence the public decision-making process.

So, the attitudes of Swedes have changed. Their willingness to become members of political parties, to participate actively in party work and to accept elected positions has stagnated, whereas other activities such as writing letters to the editor, giving speeches at meetings and participating in demonstrations have shown a sharp increase in the past 20 years.

It can be expected that people increasingly will demand that politics and politicians present their views more clearly in the local community. This requires more efficient, direct communications between people and their elected representatives. It presupposes greater openness and opportunities for public disclosure in administrative agencies. It also requires improved mechanisms for direct public influence on local policies and in municipal services.

Strong Swedish public involvement in environmental matters and in issues connected with sustainable development has significantly influenced the traditional political parties. Popular support for efforts to promote equality between men and women has resulted in increased female participation in elected bodies on all levels of government. In the general elections that took place in September 1994, the proportion of women in Parliament increased from 33 percent in the previous house to 41 percent in the present.

## **2. THE CHALLENGES OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

### **2.1 Basic considerations**

#### *Physical conditions*

Human activities are, in a long range and in a global perspective, subject to the same restrictions as all other life on earth, but affect the living conditions of all.

Based on this realization, any sustainable development must meet the following conditions:

- a) Nature's resource-generating processes, including biological diversity, must be preserved and strengthened.
- b) Consumption of natural resources can not be greater than nature's resource-generating capacity.
- c) Societies must phase out their dependency on non-renewable natural resources and ultimately rely on resources that are re-circulated in natural ecocycles.

To meet the need of using some minimum amounts of substances that cannot form part of natural ecocycles, such substances must be managed in closed material cycles with minimum transport requirements. To the largest possible extent, such types of substances should ultimately be phased out.

### *Right from the outset*

Human activities and use of natural resources have always had impacts on the environment. Nowhere today is air, land or water unaffected. In Sweden, the efforts made to date have limited the detrimental effects on public health. The effects of pollution on human health and on the built-up environment cause special problems in our urban areas.

Environmental policy, now and in the future, must focus on influencing the processes by which our way of life, and our use of natural resources and energy cause harm to the environment. Against this background it is clear that retrospective cleanup and treatment is not enough.

Future environmental work must be characterized by the principle of prevention. Just as it is obviously best and cheapest to do things right from the outset, it must become obviously correct to do things in a clean and resource-minimizing way from the outset. If, for example, it is possible to avoid waste management problems in the future, this must be reflected from the product design stage onwards.

To allow for sustainable economic growth, societies must make farsighted use of land and water areas and of natural resources tied to such resources. A sound management must strike a balance between the need to secure the long term supply of natural resources, the responsibility to preserve cultural heritage and natural ecosystems and the need to use land and water areas for sustainable urban development and other needs of the modern eco-cycles oriented industrial society. Changes in land use must be scrutinized so as to ensure due priorities to the long term public interests. Planning legislation should define such interests and in particular ensure adequate considerations of cultural, social and environmental interests and of those interests that have a weak position on the marketplace.

Defending the cultural heritage represented by monuments, buildings, parks, streets and public space is a compulsory starting point for physical planning. Paying due attention in planning and construction to the potentials of the built-up environment as part of a historical landscape, will offer prospects for rich and interesting environments that can strongly contribute to the sustainability of human settlements. Conservation of the cultural heritage is an important contribution to social cohesion by enriching the life of the citizens and by conveying the continuous story of human ambitions and developments.

### *Need for action*

The foundations of greater insight into global environmental threats were laid at the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), held in Rio de Janeiro twenty years later, perhaps the most important international environmental event in recent years, realizing the need for action on all levels of government, adopted Agenda 21 - the action program for sustainable development. The Swedish Government considers the principles of sustainable development and the implementation of Agenda 21 to be politically and morally binding for the global community.

### *An enabling environment*

The Rio documents acknowledge that people are at centre of concern for sustainable development and that all human beings are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with the environment. Economic and social conditions must be improved in all parts of the world to ensure the attainment of environmental goals and the sustainable management with natural resources.

The declaration of the Social Summit in Copenhagen, held in April 1995, recognized that far too many people, and particularly women and children, are vulnerable to stress and deprivation. Poverty, unemployment and social disintegration too often result in isolation, marginalization and violence. The insecurity many people, in particular vulnerable people, face about their future - their own and their children's - is intensifying.

The Action Programme of the Copenhagen Social Summit, includes goals and measures for follow up and implementation of the four global social challenges: the creation of an enabling environment for social development; the eradication of poverty; the expansion of productive employment and reduction of unemployment; and the promotion of social integration. The Action Programme has fundamental importance to sustainable urban development. A broad based participation and involvement of civil society is necessary for follow-up and change of the present situation. A well functioning market economy and the advancement of sustainable economic growth will be fundamental to national implementation of the Social Summit Action Programme.

The promotion of an enabling environment for social development, based on a people-centred approach to sustainable development, must be integrated into development work at all governmental levels. It will then be natural to integrate work on the follow-up of the Copenhagen commitments into existing national, regional and local structures of planning and management, including work in line with Agenda 21.

## **2.2 Community work and local resources**

To a large extent geographical factors determine the opportunities for the individual to satisfy basic needs for instance of a job and of higher education. The general welfare policy is designed to satisfy peoples needs both in urban and rural areas. The urbanisation process has however threatened the vitality of many small towns and rural communities. Even if the welfare state would be able to provide the citizen in such places with the same public services as elsewhere, the individual would find that local shops closed and that traditional jobs in forestry and farming declined. Many rural communities in practice have seemed to become excluded from the main stream of the Swedish society.

In the beginning of the 1980s the situation was very critical for large parts of the Swedish countryside. As the economic activity was very low, young people moved out, leaving only elderly behind. People felt no hope for the future. This was the starting point for a national effort for the countryside, the campaign "All of Sweden shall live", with strong participation from many local organisations and movements. The most important result was the powerful local mobilization process, which created a new vitality in many rural communities. At the end of 1995 there were approximately 3 000 local co-operatives and community groups spread all over Sweden, working for rural area development.

The concept of local mobilisation has come into focus also for community work in distressed urban areas. When analyzing economic, social and cultural prerequisites for people to master their own daily lives and involve in local action for change, the concept of empowerment has been introduced. As Swedish cities face unemployment figures previously unknown, social exclusion and social segregation in distressed urban areas become problems of even greater magnitude than the problems that face peripheral rural communities. Several fundamental questions now need to be put under debate. For example, formal and informal jobs and other creative activities must be re-examined in the taxation system. Administrative rules that interfere with peoples abilities to act on their own, or that obstruct an integrated approach by the public sector to the individual's social development, must be reviewed. Even established welfare legislation and labour market systems need reconsideration.

## **2.3 Local Agenda 21 - The Swedish experience**

Local commitments and local action constitute the basis for sustainable development. For Sweden, the work of the municipalities with Local Agenda 21 programmes is of central importance. Virtually all Swedish municipalities

are presently involved in work following the UNCEDs recommendation to draw up a Local Agenda 21 programme, by 1996. The goal is to create, at local level and in dialogue with communities within the municipality and other concerned partners, programmes for development that are sustainable from the environmental, social and economic points of view.

Local knowledge and ideas are being developed and drawn upon to find practicable methods of work. Individual citizens, grass-roots movements, businesses, and non-governmental organisations take active part in information and education campaigns related to Local Agenda 21 programmes. Civil servants and politicians in municipal councils, executive boards and standing committees are finding ways of integrating environmental issues into their everyday work.

The results from the Rio Conference and the commitments for action contained in Agenda 21 have been inspiring also at the regional and national levels. In April 1995 a National committee on sustainable development was established, chaired by the Minister of the Environment. The main tasks are to develop a national Agenda 21 and to participate in and contribute to development of local Agenda 21 work in Sweden. The Government has provided funds for special Local Agenda 21 projects from which municipalities and NGOs can get support.

The spatial development concept "Visions and Strategies around the Baltic Sea 2010", adopted in December 1994 by the Ministers responsible for Spatial Planning of eleven neighbouring countries, is a joint vision for the sustainable development of the Baltic Sea region. In the spirit of Agenda 21, the long standing co-operation in the field of cleaning the Baltic Sea and its polluting sources is followed up by the promotion of transport links, efforts to reinforce and restructure urban areas and urban centers and to support areas of particular common interest, such as border areas, coastal areas and natural and cultural areas of special importance. Municipalities and regional authorities in these countries have started twinning co-operation on issues like development of local democracy, environmental protection, Local Agenda 21 etc. with good results.

### **3. HOUSING POLICIES IN TRANSITION**

#### **3.1 Housing, urbanisation and economic growth**

The rapid urbanisation taking place in Sweden after the second world war was a result of continued migration from rural areas to urban centers of varying sizes. A large proportion of the migrants previously lived in unsanitary and crowded conditions, often in rural areas with few job opportunities, except in the diminishing agricultural sector. Urban areas grew at more or less the same pace all over the country.



Industrial employment in urban areas, particularly in southern Sweden, around the coastlines and in natural resource-dependent industrial sites in the north and in the inland, grew fast and there was a common understanding that individuals and households wanting to raise their standards of living would need to move to where the new jobs were. Housing conditions in urban areas were however generally poor, the stock of dwellings far too limited and the rents had risen considerably, particularly in the larger towns. The needs for massive improvement of Swedish housing were generally recognized by the end of the 1940s.

The 1945 report of the Social Housing Commission had great importance for the development and construction of Swedish housing policy. When analyzing the housing market in Sweden the Commission noted that new production of dwellings was far below needs despite high rents and high profits for the estate owners. Housing production also seemed to have a very low productivity compared to other sectors. The market seemed unable to produce new dwellings at prices that a large proportion of the population could afford, resulting in miserable housing conditions for many.

An integrated Swedish housing policy was developed, aiming at eliminating housing shortage, at increasing the standards for equipment and living space in dwellings and at reducing the share for housing in household budgets. Later on supplementary goals were adopted with regard to environmental qualities, the general accessibility of dwellings, neutral economic conditions between different tenancy categories and comparable costs for comparable dwellings.

New theories for regional industrial policy were introduced. Infrastructure development and housing were to support and strengthen Swedish economic growth and policies of full employment, by providing adequate housing and necessary public services to people on places with favourable conditions for economic growth.

In 1967 the Parliament declared that "the goal of Swedish housing policy is to provide the whole population with sound, spacious, well-planned and appropriately equipped homes of good quality at reasonable cost". The strong public sector commitment in Swedish housing policy was justified by the fundamental importance of the home to family life, for the development of children and adolescents, for the individual's rest and recreation and to his health and ability to work,

In contrast to most other industrialized countries, Sweden did not favour the establishment of a special protected housing sector for marginal households. Rather, low-income households should be integrated in the general housing market.

Perhaps as a result of the notion that older housing was of poor technical quality and represented health risks, the demolition of large housing blocks and built-up areas as well as large amounts of older individual buildings was an

integrated part of the Swedish urbanisation process. Some of these buildings and sites would today have been appreciated for their social and cultural qualities. Many Swedish cities and towns would have been able to offer a more architecturally interesting living environment, not least in their downtown areas, had more of these estates been preserved or transformed with a better understanding of historical and cultural qualities.

### **3.2 Implementing an integrated housing policy**

The State and the municipalities have shared responsibility for the means needed to implement the goals of Swedish housing policy. The State has guaranteed the provision of credits for the construction of housing. The State has also accepted the over-all responsibility for economic support to low-income households, allowing them access to dwellings of adequate size and standards. Responsibility for local planning and administration was delegated to the reformed municipalities, the State firmly leading the course by over-all planning, by the provision of technical know-how as well as by legal and financial means.

Municipalities made necessary arrangements for the practical implementation and for reducing the speculative component of housing production, such as physical planning, building and land use control, initiation of housing production, allocation of building rights to different producers, influencing the forms of tenure and assisting in the technical distribution of means-tested housing allowances. The municipalities were also responsible for advocating the housing needs within their territory through municipal housing provision programmes.

In order to reduce real estate speculation, the municipalities were provided legal means to acquire large areas of land for future development and for urban expansion. An expanded right of expropriation and an obligation for sellers to offer the municipality a first option to buy land, at a price level determined considering general land prices in the area as well as common interests with regard to land use, were the most important means.

The municipal initiation of housing production presupposed a right to establish non-profit municipal housing companies, which together with co-operative housing companies were favoured both with regard to access to credits and to adequate building lots. Municipal housing should be open to all categories of people, irrespective of their economic situation. They should be self-supporting and managed on a non-profit basis. One important effect of the municipalities acting as builders and landlords was the maintaining of desired levels of housing production of high quality, when private actors were hesitating. Such levels of housing production had however never been possible without the generous subsidy policies, enabling individual household to maintain a housing standard much higher than would have been possible on an un-subsidized market.

The goals and principles of Swedish housing policy were widely shared by private enterprise, citizens organisations, municipalities and by the real estate sector. Almost all housing has been constructed by private enterprise. An important role was played by the two leading co-operative housing associations HSB and Riksbyggen. HSB, a national federation of housing co-operatives, was initiated by members of the tenants' movement as a reaction against the conditions that prevailed on the housing market in the 1920s. HSB is a multi-tier organisation with the objective of providing its members with quality housing. Riksbyggen, a co-operative housing union, was initiated in 1941 by workers in the building unions to overcome unemployment in the building sector in a period with a chronic housing shortage. Riksbyggen is owned by associated building unions, popular organisations and housing associations. HSB and Riksbyggen early became leading agents in setting the quality targets for new housing, as well as in the improvement of residents influence and participation in housing management.

### **3.3 Some experiences from Swedish housing production in the past decades**

#### *The one million dwellings programme*

In 1965 the Parliament decided that one million dwellings should be built in Sweden in the following 10-year period. A strong and forceful effort was needed to overcome the general housing shortage. As in many other industrial countries at the time, industrial building methods, large series and state subsidies were to be the means. New production techniques were employed, new products were tried and the site plans were organized to allow for maximum production speed and efficiency. Based on research, dwelling lay-out principles were developed to suit the needs of the families. These principles were made mandatory as minimum standards for financing and building permits.

The dwellings produced were generally well planned and efficient, suiting most needs of the residents. But pre-fabricated construction constrained variation and architectural expression. The outdoor environment, leisure areas and playgrounds were functional but plain, often resulting in anonymous and stereotype environments.

The magnitude of the programme, that actually was implemented in 8 years, may be understood by comparison to the total dwelling stock of that time of around three million dwellings. The programme favoured large scale projects by better financing, facilitated governmental and municipal planning procedures etc. The construction was carried out by private enterprise, and the main bulk of housing from this period is privately owned or owned by municipal housing companies.

The programme was implemented in most parts of the country, but the really large sites were concentrated to the larger cities and industrial towns. The projects were dominated by multi-family, often high-rise buildings. They

formed the base for a massive wave of urbanisation, where not only people from Swedish rural areas were accommodated, but also many immigrants from a large number of different countries.

### *Improving the housing stock*

When the housing market got less tight in the early 1970s, partly as the result of the successful one million dwellings programme, families who could find better options often moved out of the estates of the programme. Many families wanted more spacious living conditions, better outdoor environmental qualities and often preferred to live in a single family house with a private garden.

As a reaction against the high-rise buildings and the sterile site plans of the previous period, a large number of single family houses were built in the country side and in smaller conurbations. In the cities, housing projects were developed with stronger roots in urban traditions and characterized by small scale, low buildings and narrow streets. They were often carried out as infill projects on vacant inner city sites with greater architectural concern.

Responding to the oil crisis and the need for substantial energy-saving measures as well as to calls for general improvements of the existing housing stock, the Parliament in the middle of the 1970s decided on programmes for housing rehabilitation, energy conservation, and improvement of outdoor environmental qualities in housing estates. One programme aimed at renovation of private and public housing built before 1960. Another programme financed improvements in run down housing estates. In 1983 the Parliament adopted an ambitious Housing Improvement Programme for repairs, additions and modernisation, adding to existing favourable government financing of housing renewal.

In the first stage, buildings from between 1880 and 1920 were renovated. Many small flats were merged to larger ones, to attract families with children to the central parts of cities and towns. Elevators were installed, to improve access for elderly and disabled persons. Kitchens and bathrooms were enlarged and modernized. Cultural values and social concerns did not always get adequate attention in the implementation of the programme. Despite the generous national subsidies, the improvements often resulted in sharp rent increases, displacing low income families and people in need of cheap accommodation. At the same time renovated inner city flats became attractive for households of relative affluence, that could afford the higher rents.

Two thirds of the dwellings produced during the period after the completion of the one million dwellings programme were single family houses, often built in peripheral sites. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, such houses often were spacious, having one or two living rooms, one or two bathrooms, and three or four bedrooms.

### *Increased building costs*

A national credit expansion in the late 1980s resulted in inflationary growth of the economy with substantial building costs increases and increases in interest rates. A wave of speculation in the private sector made real estate prices increase. Construction of new housing more than doubled, culminating in 1990 when the construction of almost 70 000 units was started, equivalent to 1,7 percent of the housing stock. However, unlike two decades earlier, it was not possible to keep down the building costs. Subsidies to the housing sector increased rapidly in spite of attempts to brake their growth, including making the right of deduction for interests less profitable at taxation.

This period was followed by an extremely deep regression in the early 1990s. A tax reform was to a large extent financed in the housing sector, thus increasing the average households housing costs considerably. Households in the higher income layers could compensate this by lower income tax. For others increased housing allowances gave a certain relief. In a few years, rising unemployment and pessimism regarding future prospects for the economy, made the demand for new housing to almost vanish. The production of new housing diminished with approximately 90 percent. In 1994 only 12 000 units were started. To some extent this was caused by an over production the previous years, and to some extent by the almost explosive raise in building costs. The financial crisis of the early 1990s made it clear that previous housing subsidies and housing allowances would have to be reduced.

### *Housing subsidies*

An instrument of fundamental importance to the implementation of Swedish housing policies has been government involvement in financing. The government offered long-term low interest loans for the portion of the housing capital required that was hardest to finance on the ordinary credit market. Almost all housing in Sweden is built with government support. Since 1975, there has been a general system of interest subsidies for housing, provided in the form of compensation for interest expenses related to construction or conversion of housing. Apart from minor adjustments, the system remained unchanged up to and including 1992.

Since 1993 entirely new regulations apply to state support to the construction and maintenance of housing. The allowance system is simplified and in the long term allowances will diminish. Interest allowances are granted in proportion to the interest cost of a capital sum corresponding to a basis for allowance, arrived at by a standard calculation. The standard sum is linked to the size of dwellings. The total costs for state interest subsidies for housing the fiscal year 1994/95 is estimated to 32 billion SEK.

There are two systems of housing allowances for households. One applies to senior citizens and people with early retirement pensions, the other chiefly to low-income families with children. During 1994 the two systems of allowances

totalled almost 20 billion SEK, of which 44 percent refers to allowances for low-income families.

As from 1992, investments in new production and renovation are financed entirely in the capital market. Credits are usually loans, repayable in about 40 or 50 years. A state guarantee for the part of the loan with the highest credit risk, covering about 30-40 percent of a guarantee basis, is obtainable on payment of a charge.

As part of labour market policies, special subsidies were introduced in the spring of 1995 to support rebuilding activities, inter alia renovation and extension measures improving the housing stock, starting before the end of September 1995 and finished before December 1996. As the subsidies cover also some major maintenance measurements, the rebuilding program has led to considerable activity in the building industry. Applications for these special subsidies in november 1995 amounts to more than 2,6 billion SEK.

Furthermore an investment allowance has been introduced for a limited period of time to support the increased production of housing projects starting before the end of 1996.

#### *Tenancy rights and the role of the tenants*

Out of Sweden's total dwelling stock, two million are flats in multifamily houses of varying sizes, the main share (66%) being rental flats owned by private landlords or by municipal housing companies. Swedish legislation provides tenants with a strong position by giving several important tasks to a recognized "organisation of tenants". The Swedish Union of Tenants, with some 600 000 households as members, organizes almost half of all Swedish tenants.

In 1978 the parliament decided that an "organisation of tenants" has the right to negotiate with public landlords to establish the rents for housing in the municipal housing sector. The rent level agreed upon in the municipal housing sector should then as the "use value", form the basis for corresponding rent negotiations with the private sector. Tenants have a legal influence on urban planning matters according to the Planning and Building Act. If a landlord is not fulfilling his duties when it comes to the management of the building, the tenants association has the right to go to the court, demanding that the municipality take care of the building. Sweden has twelve Rent Tribunals, responsible for settling rent disputes in different geographical areas. The Rent Tribunal consists of a judge as the chairperson, one officer appointed as proposed by the landlords organisation, and one as proposed by the tenants organisations.

### **3.4 Social integration and multi problem estates**

Sweden does not have any social housing that is open only to disadvantaged households. But nevertheless, segregation certainly exists. Firstly, low income households represent a large share of the rental sector. Secondly, within this sector, more unstable households tend to concentrate to the less attractive estates. On the other hand rent control and housing allowances generally makes it possible for low income households to stay in dwellings of good quality in stable and reasonably attractive areas, with mixed social groups. Public efforts to attain the goal of equity in the housing sector seem to have been successful in an international comparison. Several estates in the largest cities however, show signs of segregation and are distressed to an extent that is comparable with distressed areas in other industrialized countries in Europe and north America.

60 percent of the dwellings produced during the one million dwellings programme of the 1960s and 1970s were located in estates with ten or more identical buildings. The Commission on Metropolitan Problems in 1985 defined 50 neighbourhoods in the three biggest cities in Sweden as being the least attractive. Altogether 10 percent of the population of these cities lived in these neighbourhoods in 1985. In Göteborg and Malmö these areas are relatively close to the city center, while they in the Stockholm region are situated in 15 separate peripheral locations.

All of these 50 areas had at least twice as high a proportion of people on social security benefits as the three cities as a whole. The proportion of the population born abroad was considerably higher, the proportion of low-income individuals very high, pupils school grades were low and the absenteeism from work due to sickness was considerably higher than in other districts. In almost all of the areas there was such mobility that only a half of the population remained after a five year period. Studies of population change in these areas show that they are in a descending spiral, with an increasing number of low-income households and an increasing proportion born abroad.

A number of these neighbourhoods are very densely populated by immigrants and the density seems to increase with time. On the other hand the great majority of immigrants do not live in areas where the concentration of immigrants is high. It is during their first years in Sweden that immigrants seem to settle in neighbourhoods of high immigrant concentration.

Risks for further social segregation is one possible consequence of recent changes in the Swedish housing market. With increasing deregulation and loosened rent controls, differences in rents will increase and respond to market signals to a larger extent than up till now. In forecasts concerning the future housing market there is some agreement that locational factors will have more influence on the distribution of social groups than today. With greater differences in rents between homes in different parts of the city, households with little ability to pay will move from flats in attractive areas and be

concentrated to less attractive estates, often owned by the municipal housing companies. In the big cities this effect is most visible as differences between the centre and the periphery.

It is important to be aware of the resources represented by the residents and by the qualities of the existing residential environment. Even if the current view of these "problem areas" is largely a negative one, one should realize that by international standards these neighbourhoods have qualities which often are absent in estates occupied by corresponding groups of the population in many other countries. Such qualities - high housing standards, public transport, infrastructure for public and private service, cultural assets and green areas, opportunities for sports, outdoor recreation and gardening - could in Sweden provide potentials for improvements and for sustained human development.

When it comes to multi-problem housing estates with the level of problems pointed out by the Commission on Metropolitan Problems in 1985, several attempts for large scale physical renovation have been made, often resulting in alarming costs and need for rent increases. Some examples however have proved successful. The cases of Bergsjön in Göteborg, Kronogården in Trollhättan and Backlura in Nynäshamn provide promising examples for common follow up.

### **3.5 Co-ordinated residential services, special housing for elderly and disabled people**

In 1985 the Swedish Parliament adopted a programme for improved living conditions for elderly people, disabled people and people with lingering illnesses. The programme states that:

- All people are entitled to a home where the individuals freedom and integrity is protected.
- Those who need every day support shall be offered such support in their local neighbourhood and in forms that secures the independence of the individual.
- All people, regardless of their need for care and service, are entitled to a dwelling with adequate accessibility and standard of equipment in an environment suitable for the individuals participation in social life.

To give a stimulus to the implementation of this programme at local level, the Government between 1985 and 1990 allocated 100 million SEK to the development of better neighbourhood services by multi-sectoral co-operation and coordination. These efforts, carried out in 101 projects, were oriented at finding new ways of co-operation between public bodies, organisations, residents and the business sector within local communities. The development work has as much been oriented at improving solidarity and cohesion, better use of resources, extended public participation and social renewal having been common goals.



The conclusion of the evaluation of the 101 projects programme is, that through co-operation in the local community it is possible to improve neighbourhood services, and to improve solidarity and cohesion and sometimes also to save resources. It is possible to expand residents' participation and carry out physical as well as social renewal. Co-ordinated residential services has proved to be an effective instrument to support liveability not only for groups with special demands, but for all residents in urban and rural settlements alike.

From the early 1980s up till now there has been a general shift in Sweden from institutionalized care to other forms of care for the elderly. In 1991 an extensive reform was decided by Parliament, giving the municipalities the responsibility to provide special housing services and care for the elderly and for people with disabilities. 3 billion SEK were allocated for the period 1991-1996 as stimulus grants for the construction and development of special housing services. Together with general housing subsidies and special allowances for rebuilding homes for the elderly, these stimulus grants have made improvements possible in the quality of life for many people with extensive need for every-day care and support.

Old people in Sweden seldom live together with their children. 50 percent of senior citizens households are single person households. Most of them have a near relationship to close relatives, "intimacy at distance". The vast majority of the 1,5 million Swedes that now are senior citizens or early retirement pensioners live in regular dwellings with modern facilities. Co-ordinated residential services, making use of public, commercial and informal resources, to an increasing extent allows elderly people, disabled people and people with lingering illnesses to live a satisfying life in their own homes.

In 1994, 136 000 persons or just over 9 percent of people over 65, lived in special housing - homes for old people, in flats in a bloc of service flats, in group homes or in nursing homes. With increasing age this share increases. In age groups above eighty, c(a) 25 percent live in special housing.

A large group of elderly persons, more than 100 000, are struck by various forms of demens illnesses. A quarter of these persons live in private dwellings while the majority live in special housing. As part of a reform in Swedish psychiatric care in January 1995, temporary funds were assigned to the housing needs of mentally disturbed persons.

### **3.6 Homelessness**

In 1993, when Sweden had around 40 000 vacant dwellings, it was estimated that around 10 000 persons were homeless, defined as persons who do not rent or own a home, are not on permanent lodgings, are depending on temporary housing alternatives or sleep rough. 10 percent were vagrants, 30 percent in residential care for drug abuse with no home to return to when discharged. The problems for the homeless in Sweden generally do not seem to be caused by housing shortage but rather by social preconditions.

There are about 8 000 places in boarding homes and trial homes for the homeless. In most parts of the country outside of Stockholm the number of places seems sufficient for the needs. A 1993 survey showed the main causes for homelessness to be that the individual cannot keep up with the rent and cannot live independently without disturbing neighbours. Unemployment, poverty, drug abuse and mental illness to varying degrees play a part in the lives of most homeless people. Policy measures therefore need to be directed at improving the health, the social conditions and the access to the labour market of the homeless.

### **3.7 Priorities**

Many of the quantitative goals of Swedish housing policy have been successfully implemented. The general housing shortage belongs to the past, with one housing unit for every two inhabitants. Three quarter of the housing stock has been produced after 1945, and the older dwellings have largely been modernized. Almost no households are crowded and only one percent of the units is not fully modern.

Today Sweden has some 4,2 million dwellings, about 2,3 million of which are in blocks of flats and the other 1,9 million in single- or two-family houses. There are about 470 dwellings per thousand inhabitants (1990 census). In 1990, 60 % of the population lived in single- or two-family houses. 70 % of all families with children fell into this category.

There are on the average 2,0 rooms (kitchen included) per inhabitant and the average living area per person approaches 48 square meters. The differences in average living area per person between the separate tenures are small. Only in 2 % of the households do more than two persons have to share a bedroom.

In the short term, interest rates endanger the adaptation of the housing stock to new demands, reducing incentives of both the building industry and of potential landlords, homeowners and tenants. In some regions local housing shortage is occurring again. The crucial issue of the day is whether it is at all possible to finance housing with present rent levels and to which extent housing in the future will be financed through a deregulated market or over the State budget.

Swedish general housing policies aim at giving all households a possibility to afford a suitable and comfortable dwelling in a secure neighbourhood. These policies now have to be reconsidered under the new economic constraints. New strategies are needed to safeguard the adequate provision of housing for all, to promote integration and counteract segregation, meet the needs of children, adolescents, women and elderly people and of disabled persons, empower the tenants and provide financial support to the existing housing stock and to the production of new housing. Special efforts are needed to promote satisfactory living conditions in distressed residential areas in Swedish cities and to find new strategies for the integration of immigrants and for their adjustment to living conditions in different parts of Sweden.

## **4. BUILDING FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

### **4.1 Progress and failures**

Experience from Swedish building methods and building technology from the 1960s and onwards give evidence both of progress and of failure. Building design and planning, in compliance with former detailed building requirements, generally resulted in well-functioning and adequately equipped dwellings in multi-family as well as single family houses. Criticism more often dealt with the exterior of buildings and the qualities of the outdoor environment than with the qualities of the indoor environment.

The way certain modern building materials were used, the introduction of new techniques for insulation and ventilation of buildings, the late knowledge about effects of exposure to radon close to or in buildings, and widespread fears of negative impacts of certain electrical equipment in buildings have caused concern among both specialists and the general public. Lacking knowledge when it comes to the technical functions and qualities of traditional building has caused damage and costs when repairing and maintaining the existing building stock.

The building industry is an important partner in efforts for sustainable resource management. Insufficient competition and reliance on State subsidies is part of the explanation for high building costs. The Swedish industry needs to change its present practices when it comes to resource management, material flows, general recycling and not least the management of potentially hazardous building materials and components.

The Nordic climate makes energy conservation imperative in a sustainability perspective. Swedish present abundance of electricity produced in nuclear power plants and in hydro-electric power plants, has resulted in low consumer prices. To raise interest in preparing the stock of buildings for a future situation with higher energy costs, political interventions have been necessary. They have included extra taxation on electricity and subsidies for measures such as rigorous insulation. Heating of tight and well-insulated new buildings will annually demand only 100 kWh/m<sup>2</sup>, despite that for instance Stockholm has an annual average temperature of 6 degrees Celsius (with a variation between - 15 and + 25). In the existing building stock special programmes have been implemented to improve efficiency in energy use.

### **4.2 Healthy buildings**

Recent studies show that Swedes on the average spend 90 percent of their time indoors, in the home, in the workplace or in various other buildings. Many health problems related to draft, cold and poor hygiene are now eliminated. In recent decades Swedes have however experienced health problems of new kinds, that many people believe are related to the indoor environment.

The reasons behind allergies and hyper-sensitivity, that seem to increase in Sweden in a worrying pace, are not quite clear. The need for cross-sectoral research, including building research, is generally agreed upon. Based on present knowledge, indoor air is pointed out as one of several other factors, such as food, chemicals in artefacts and smoking, causing allergies and hyper-sensitivity. Emissions from different materials are more frequent when the materials are in contact with moisture. According to several studies, inadequate procedures in the introduction of new production technology, in the use of new and untested materials and in the installation and maintenance of ventilation systems, are to blame. Discomfort and ill-health symptoms are more common in multi-family blocks than in single family dwellings. It is reported from the business sector that 40 percent of men and 60 percent of women working in offices, experience at least one symptom per week of allergies or over-sensitivity.

Fundamental decisions were made by Parliament in 1988, requiring a thorough overview of the problems as well as adequate proposals for preventive and mitigating measures. As a follow-up a Committee was appointed for questions regarding "sick buildings". In 1990 a report was presented by the Committee, suggesting a number of measures. Almost every year since then, the Parliament has considered proposals from the Government regarding in-door air. Decisions have included

- mandatory controls of ventilation systems in most buildings,
- mandatory negotiations during the building process and
- insurance systems covering costs due to building errors.

About 130 000 dwellings in Sweden are calculated to have or have had rates of radon that are higher than the recommended highest value of 400 Bq/m<sup>3</sup> in existing dwellings. The radon rate in new buildings may not exceed 200 Bq/m<sup>3</sup>. Most measures necessary to reduce radon levels in existing buildings are simple and inexpensive. It is mandatory for land lords and homeowners to arrange for acceptable conditions in their own buildings.

The alleviation of health problems in buildings is to a large extent related to controlling dampness in buildings and to proper maintenance particularly of ventilation systems. Well functioning ventilation systems obviously are a prerequisite for acceptable levels of dampness, radon and other emissions. Municipalities are responsible for the control of ventilation systems. A recent study showed that 60 percent of the municipalities failed in carrying out controls to the extent expected by parliament. A 1995 survey of the effects of on-going preventive and mitigating programs showed remarkably little progress, in spite of satisfactory knowledge about how interior air pollution can be avoided, and how high rates of dampness or radon can be avoided.

A proposal to Parliament was presented in the spring of 1995 to allow 2 billion SEK be used for concrete measures to improve the indoor climate in dwellings and public premises, like schools and nurseries. The program will include

improvements in ventilation systems, mould sanitation and exchange of damp or emitting building components and other allergy preventing measures. Other proposals aim at improving efficiency in established control systems.

### **4.3 Ecology-based construction**

The Swedish public has over the past decades showed an increasing interest in ecology-based construction as part of the development of environmentally friendly life styles. The eco-municipality project involves municipalities all over Sweden and the concept of eco-villages has won wide acceptance.

Many initiatives have been taken by individual families, architects and builders to apply new ways of building design and new ways for adjusting buildings and the technical contents of buildings to local environmental conditions. Such new ecology-based approaches have often raised questions with regard to previous local land use and building control policies. As customers and clients ask for environmental impacts of construction, many builders now use environmental arguments in their promotion of housing projects.

Quite a few successful examples of technical solutions for ecology-based construction are now to be found in Sweden. It is important that new experimental projects are carried out, that can serve as best practices and as sources of inspiration for future building and building management. There are some forms of national support to ecology-based building projects. Funds for building research and for experimental construction may be used. Several projects have also been implemented through regular channels of support to building.

### **4.4 Waste management and recycling**

Much waste is produced in the process of building, reconstruction and demolition. The quality and the chemical contents of building components play a crucial role for the impact of the building industry on resource management and the environment. The annual production of waste from the building sector in Sweden was estimated to 1 750 000 tons in the early 1990's. Roughly 30 000 tons of lead, 400 tons of freon, 10 tons of cadmium and 400 kilos of mercury was included in the total waste production. Statistics over waste from the Swedish building and construction sector in 1990 showed that 91 percent of total waste was brought to deponies, that 5 percent was burnt and only 4 percent was re-used or re-circulated.

In the very last few years there seems to have developed a common understanding of the need to radically increase resource management and recycling in the building sector. Some builders have started internal programmes to increase environmental awareness in their company. In the spring of 1995 the Government proposed an amendment to the Planning and Building Act requiring that a demolition plan be mandatory for the demolition of qualified buildings. The main purpose of the demolition plan is to ensure re-circulation

of building materials and re-use of building components. This will be of importance also for the preservation and revival of buildings and of interiors being part of the Swedish cultural heritage.

#### **4.5 Energy conservation**

The energy crisis of the 1970s resulted in the first Swedish energy management regulations in 1978. Regulations and rules for loans and allowances have since then guided energy use in the housing stock. Between 1970 and 1994, the specific gross energy use for heating and hot water in Swedish housing diminished from 340 kWh per m<sup>2</sup> to 220 kWh per m<sup>2</sup>. For Sweden this means that the total end gross energy use has remained at 150 TWh annually, while the heated floor-space has increased from 430 million m<sup>2</sup> to 630 million m<sup>2</sup>. Energy use thus is more than 50 TWh lower than if energy management measures had not been applied. For consumers this means an annual saving of 2,5 billion SEK.

Under the same period the annual electricity use for hot water, heating, and household equipment and running increased from 15 TWh to 35 TWh, while transformation losses diminished from 34 TWh to 19 TWh. Housing and premises now make up for more than half the Swedish use of electricity and options for effectivisation and transfer to other energy sources are manifold. Distribution technology has become simpler and more effective and remote cooling is a new technology on the edge of introduction. The technology for heat distribution should be oriented towards reparation, maintenance and more effective use of existing systems.

#### **4.6 An accessible built environment**

The Swedish building stock is far from generally well adapted to the needs of elderly persons or to the needs of disabled people. 38 percent of all dwellings, have no or only minor barriers like one or two steps and are accessible for persons using a stick. 62 percent have more difficult barriers like three or more steps. 22 percent of the total dwelling stock, all of them in flats, have serious barriers with one flight of stairs or more. Many of these flats would need a lift installation to become accessible.

Accessibility by wheelchair demands extra wide doorways and ramps not steeper than 1/12. Few existing dwellings can be said to be fully accessible for people using a wheelchair. People using wheelchairs therefore have very limited choices on the housing market, compared to people at large. All disabled people, however, are entitled to housing improvement grants to eliminate barriers and improve bathroom and kitchen accessibility.

The Planning and Building Act requires all new buildings, including their surroundings, to be accessible and usable for persons with reduced mobility and orientation. Certain exceptions are made for one family houses and multi-family houses with less than three stories. Workplaces may also in some cases be

exempted, depending on the type of work to be performed in the building. Since 1987 the same requirements are to be applied in renovation of buildings, unless this would be obviously unreasonable.

A study in 1994 found that present Swedish planning and building legislation includes more far reaching accessibility requirements for new and renovated buildings than legislation in most other countries. Swedish regulations have been fairly successful in providing - in new buildings and in connection with renovation of buildings - the basic amenities needed with regard to mobility impairments, such as the layouts of bathrooms and kitchens, and the removal of barriers like differences in levels. They have however, had no influence when it comes to removing, in existing buildings, minor barriers like single steps, kerbs and thresholds or in providing automatic door openers, adequate signs etc. Such barriers are common in housing as well as in working places and in public buildings and spaces.

The study judged present legislation as sufficient with regard to new buildings and to building renewal, but proposed more precise requirements to improve access to public places and public buildings. It also proposed the removal by the year 2000 of easily removed barriers in such places and buildings, without regard to other needs for improvement. In its proposal to Parliament in the spring of 1995, the Government stressed the importance of further improvements concerning accessibility, but demanded further calculations regarding the economic impacts of implementation.

To strengthen the position of people with disabilities, the Swedish government in 1994 established the post of Disability Ombudsman. This new authority shall promote the empowerment and the equal participation in social life of people with disabilities and ensure that measures concerning the conditions of people with disabilities are characterized by continuity and comprehensiveness.

In her first report to the government in October 1995 the Disability Ombudsman, referring to the UN standard rules regarding people with disabilities, points out several areas where changes are necessary to end practices discriminating people with disabilities. Many complaints have been received concerning insufficient accessibility to public buildings and public open space, to public transport and to cultural events. The Ombudsman proposes that the removal of easily removed barriers in public buildings and public places mentioned above, be implemented as soon as possible. Furthermore the Ombudsman demands strengthening of the legal means to intervene against builders and landlords who do not comply with legal demands for accessibility, strengthening of the training of architects and engineers regarding design considerations geared at the needs of people with disabilities as well as a number of special measures to strengthen access to public transport and public facilities at large.

#### **4.7 Public building control**

Swedish legislation regulating the quality of buildings, has recently been revised with the basic assumption that only qualities of importance from the public point of view should be controlled by public authorities and that it must be made clear that the developer has full responsibility for construction quality.

The building control process is regulated by two laws, the Planning and Building Act of 1987 and the Act of 1995 on Technical Requirements on Construction Works. All buildings and other construction works have to meet the technical demands in the National Building Requirements, issued by the National Board of Housing, Building and Planning. These requirements specify qualities of importance from public point of view, satisfying fundamental demands with regard to hygiene, health, environmental quality, energy conservation, water management and waste treatment. Also aspects on the design of dwellings and requirements to meet disabled persons needs of a barrier free environment are included.

The new system of public building control, introduced July 1 1995, regulates how the developer shall meet his obligations in fulfilling the building requirements. The rights to build are defined in the detailed development plan and in the building permit, the technical requirements are defined in the National Building Requirements.

Before starting construction works, the developer must inform the municipal building committee. Except for the most simple cases, he or she must produce a control plan for the works, to be approved by the building committee. The committee can demand the control plan to include inspection of lay outs and design and of the works by independent bodies. Such bodies must be certified by a certification agency or be approved by the municipal building committee. The committee may also inspect the works itself. If the building does not fulfil the requirements, the committee can stop the works or forbid the building to be used.

All builders are obliged to appoint a person responsible for the carrying out of the control plan. That person has to be certified by a certification agency or approved by the municipal building committee (in the case of a single specified project). The certification agencies must have accreditation by a national board for accreditation.

Professional builders of residential buildings are obliged to have an insurance covering faults and damage in the finished building.

#### **4.8 Priorities**

The development of industrialized, large scale construction was an important part of the modernisation of Swedish urban areas, needed as a consequence of rapid industrialisation and urbanisation. Swedish housing and Swedish built-up



environments are generally of reasonably high standard. Many buildings and many parts of the built-up environment - not the least from the production of the last few decades - need to be adapted to new economic, social, cultural and ecological requirements to allow for a sustainable human development.

Calls for healthy homes and healthy buildings have high relevance. New experimental projects need to be carried out to serve as best practices for ecology-based construction. As the building industry is becoming more market-responsive, it must systematically introduce eco-cycles approaches, not the least in the management of the flow of building materials and components.

It is urgent that barriers for the movement of persons with disabilities in public buildings and public spaces be removed.

The new National Building Requirements should in a few years be evaluated with regard to their effect in the promotion of building for sustainable development.

## **5. PLANNING FOR SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT**

### **5.1 City models under discussion**

#### *Swedish debate*

In recent years Sweden has been the scene of an intensified discussion on urban issues and of models for sustainable urban development. Previous concepts of urban planning and development have been challenged by increased urban dispersal and the general slowing down of urban growth. Urban qualities previously taken for granted are questioned by tendencies indicating a degradation of existing built-up areas, such as the closing of neighbourhood shops, schools and other services, as a result of population dispersal, new economic conditions for local government services, concentration of commerce into external supermarkets etc.

The plans for large scale investment in motor-way systems in Stockholm, Göteborg and Malmö as part of the upgrading of traffic systems in Swedish metropolitan areas, largely needed because of the peripheral and dispersed urban development taking place the last decades, has met strong opposition from environmentalists and large segments of the urban population claiming that the environmental impacts are unacceptable. The question of what kind of urban environment we should promote has come into focus of debate.

As a reaction against the damage made to Swedish cities by modernist town planning, the School of Architecture of the Royal Academy of Arts since the 1970s has trained its students to consider a conservative vision for urban development, making use of existing infrastructure and buildings, with the least possible alteration and without prejudiced judgements on "what life should be

like" or attempts to make the city smart looking, adjusting to the latest planners fashions.

There now seems to be a profound feeling among many Swedes that existing cultural, environmental and social qualities of urban areas should be preserved, and that development planning must take as its starting point the every day need of children, women and men for a pleasant, interesting and rewarding local environment. This would apply particularly to problems related to traffic, such as congestion, noise and poor air quality, as well as the obvious risks for reduction of parks and green zones and for general damage to the natural, social and cultural values of the built environment.

There is much on-going work under different headings and in different fora on directions for sustainable urban management and planning. A starting point for them all seems to be the understanding that Swedes have become urbanized, regardless if they live in what is defined as urban areas or not. Our future depends on our ability to find practicable ways for sustainable development of cities and urban areas, including ways of promoting the urban-rural relationships. Sustainable urban management and planning presupposes some generally accepted concepts and visions. Some examples from the Swedish debate as well as some international examples can illustrate the direction of the present debate.

#### *\* The New Neighbourhood*

The moderate size neighbourhood unit has been an important ideal in urban development in Swedish cities since the turn of the century and particularly during the 1940s and 1950s. The large scale developments common to the one million flats programme however often lacked the intimacy, variation and sense of local control of previous housing developments.

A group of Scandinavian women have developed a feminist vision, based on children needs and the human need for daily social renewal. The vision advocates small well planned settlements with a high degree of local autonomy and self-management. It emphasizes nearness between dwelling, work and care; between production and reproduction; between different age groups; between men and women; and between humans and nature.

Sigrun Kaul et al: The new everyday life - Ways and means. Nordic Council of Ministers, Copenhagen, Nord 1991:19.

#### *\* The Robust and Sustainable Town*

The vision for a robust and sustainable town is based on the analysis of threats that could face a country like Sweden in a world of change, where no country has full control against external impacts. It starts from five basic considerations:

A holistic and multi-functional view must be applied on the living environment, including housing, work, education, care, and service;

Local involvement, solidarity and togetherness are the basis for protection against external threats;

Communications and accessibility must provide local communities and individuals with possibilities to take part in public life at large, in all its diversity;

Technical infrastructures must be understandable and easy to use by the individual, and they must be based on eco-cycles principles. Resource dependant and complicated technology should be coupled with local substitute systems;

Local preparedness for food production and technical services, in combination with strong social networks, improve the ability to resist and endure crisis situations. In all decisions regarding the future of the local community, priority must be given to local survival and self-sufficiency.

The Expert Group for Security in Administration, New Construction and Rebuilding: "Den oslagbara staden" (The Invincible Town, 1995), and "Grannskapet i den oslagbara staden" (The Neighbourhood in the Invincible Town, 1995).

#### *\* The Garden City*

The garden city concept, by no means new, has been revitalized in Swedish debate as a model for sustainable urban settlements. The garden city is characterized by mixed building types including flats and single family units, human scale, moderate density, townscape features, and a private or shared garden for every building. In spite of the moderate density of the garden city, the Swedish city planning researcher Johan Rådberg has estimated, that if all of Stockholm had been built as a garden city, another half a million people could have been given residence within the same area which today is used for housing in Stockholm. Rådberg sees the garden city as a model for city renewal, for mending the tattered suburbs and peripheries around most city centres, and even for stopping and maybe reversing further urban dispersal.

Johan Rådberg: Den svenska trädgårdsstaden (The Swedish Garden City). The National Council of Building Research, 1994.

#### *\* The Moderate Size City*

The Swedish National Board of Housing, Building and Planning (Boverket) has observed some important advantages of the moderate size city of say 50 000 - 100 000 inhabitants. The moderate size city has proved to combine many qualities essential for a decent everyday life, including education and job

opportunities, public and commercial services, cultural activities, a good living environment for children and elderly and closeness to natural environments. Boverket notes that the moderate size city has good chances of making public transport economically feasible, of reducing the need for every day car commuting and therefore to provide alternatives to current dispersal of urban population. Moderate size cities also have the basic capacity to improve the eco-cycles symbiosis with the surrounding countryside, through biological production for local needs, and options for biological break-down and recycling of surplus products, sewage, and fertilisers (phosphorus and nitrogen), mud and compost.

The National Board of Housing, Building and Planning (Boverket): *Den måttfulla staden*. Rapport 1995:7.

### *\* The Dense and Integrated City*

As a contribution to the debate, the Swedish Association for Environmental protection produced a pamphlet in 1994; "Stockholm in balance - aiming at a green, competitive and integrated capital". Arguing the need for positive models for sustainable urban development, the authors acknowledge the qualities of the dense traditional inner city neighbourhoods of Stockholm. The idea of a city being to reduce distances and the need for transport and to promote mutual benefit, support, celebration and defence, the authors argue that the dispersed, tattered city of the private car is the genuine threat to Stockholm as a liveable Swedish capital.

The demolition in the 1960s of large tracts of Stockholm downtown was a great mistake that must not be repeated. The dense and lively qualities of the Stockholm inner-city should be captured back, in the inner-city as well as in the mono-functional suburbs of the million dwellings programme, which should be transformed into integrated parts of the town in the spirit of the early Swedish town planning traditions. Urban highways create barriers and even more car traffic. Streets should be considered as the city's public space, not only as stretches of transport. A number of specific town planning measures are proposed to develop Stockholm into a sustainable, integrated and competitive city.

Svenska Naturskyddsföreningen 1994: *Stockholm i balans - för en grön, konkurrenskraftig och blandad huvudstad*.

### *\* Visions for the Sustainable Metropolis*

The working group "Sustainable Metropolis", formed within Symbiosis, a local branch of the Swedish Association for Environmental Protection and at the same time one of the Students Associations of the University of Stockholm, has recently presented its vision for a sustainable metropolis. That mankind would give up its cities is as unlikely as deliberately becoming hunters again. From this starting point, the working group has developed its vision, by and by

becoming more and more convinced that the vision can be realized. The focus is on recycling of sewage, waste and emissions, implying tough requirements with regard to energy management, transport management and the management with valuable parts of sewage and waste. Other areas of importance include land use structure, information technology, increased job opportunities and the need for social and mental change.

Visions for a Sustainable Metropolis, Symbiosis, Stockholm 1995.

### *International work*

#### *\* The Ecological City*

Sweden takes an active part in the "Ecological City"-project initiated by the Group on Urban Affairs of the OECD Territorial Development Service. The City of Göteborg has provided a case study for the project, presented as the Supplement "Comprehensive Policy for Environmental Success" to the report "The Ecological City", from the Swedish National Board of Housing, Building and Planning, Karlskrona 1995.

The findings of the OECD-Sweden Seminar on the Ecological City of June 1-3 1994 are documented in the report "Urban Policies for an Environmentally Sustainable World", from the Ministry of the Environment, the Swedish Council for Building Research and the Swedish Council for Planning and Coordination of Research, Stockholm 1995.

The way cities are run and organized, the resources available for urban management, and the procedures for democracy and public participation have crucial importance for sustainable development. The concept of the ecological city must incorporate environmental, social, cultural and economic considerations, sustainable growth being the key requirement of governance.

Three general conclusions from the project should be pointed out:

- Urban performance is decisive for national, regional and global sustainability.
- Governments must provide conditions for strong and independent urban governance and ensure an adequate dialogue between the national and local government levels.
- Governments must provide integrated policies that give a stimulus to urban efforts for sustainable development.

A report from the project is expected in 1996.

### *\* European Sustainable Cities*

The Sustainable Cities Project is launched by the European Union Expert Group on the Urban Environment, the group being established by the European Commission in 1991 following the Green Paper on the Urban Environment. The principle aims of the project are to contribute to the development of thinking about sustainability in European cities, to advise the Commission on the urban dimension within EUs environmental policy, and to consider how the EU could further contribute to the improvement of the urban environment.

As Sweden is a new member of the Union, Swedish participation in the project aims at providing information about the special features and possibilities of Swedish cities, towns and urban areas and to establish contacts with experts and relevant parties within the European Union. Such information and such contacts are considered important also for proper application of EU support systems to Swedish urban structures.

"European Sustainable Cities", the first report of the project, was published in October 1994. The report strongly advocates the development of city-wide strategies for sustainable urban management. The policy areas selected as priorities for the first report were: the urban economy; land use planning; and mobility and access.

## **5.2 Urban environmental challenges**

### *Background*

Sweden's environmental debt, in the sense of the cost of repairing environmental damage occurred up till now, is estimated at approximately 260 billion SEK. The corresponding figure in 1980 was estimated to be less than half. Almost 40 percent of the annual increase is related to impacts, mainly on the climate, from the traffic and energy sectors, and almost 30 percent to impacts from sewage and waste.

Swedish environmental policy relies on increased sector responsibility and decentralization in the broad sense of the term, in order to make environmental work as deeply rooted as possible. The environmental debt must be reduced by large through local efforts in households, businesses, local communities and municipalities. The transport sector continues to represent the major problem, with an increasing share of total emissions of nitrogen and climate-affecting gases, while emissions from industry and heating are in the process of being solved. Most point source emissions have been reduced to the levels of the 1940s and the 1950s, despite multiple production increases.

The environmental problems are increasingly attributable to emissions from many small sources which have a substantial combined volume. Environmental degradation has had detrimental effects on physical assets forming parts of the cultural heritage. The destruction of natural stone for instance has accelerated,

leading to demands for costly conservation measures. It is then natural that an increased focus must be put on structural changes, allowing for more environmentally friendly patterns of everyday consumption, reproduction, production and transportation.

The impacts of emissions and of waste from urban activities on surrounding land and water areas in the urban region must be dealt with in a developed analyses of the urban-rural relationship. Biological measures in land use management for green parts of the urban regions and adjoining rural areas, such as reinstating wetlands, establishing protection for the biological life in coastal beach zones, changing the drainage systems of ditches and streams, and establishing non-cultivation zones with natural vegetation along watercourses, exemplify the mutual benefit of such analyses.

The national, regional and global impacts from urban activities in large cities and metropolitan areas, could be analysed through urban environmental indicators, measuring the net emission of for instance climate-affecting gases from the city or metropolitan area regarded as a "bubble". Thus the contribution of cities to the national, regional and global environmental debt could be estimated, and the need for adequate policy measures be appreciated.

#### *Air pollution and noise*

Transport, combustion for energy purposes and, in rare cases, industrial processes are the predominant sources of air pollution in Swedish urban areas. The types of pollutants causing most serious urban air problems are sulphur and nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, soot and other particles, carcinogenic substances, ground-level ozone and lead.

Sulphur-dioxide concentrations have declined sharply since the 1970s and are today well below the limits allowed, even on busy streets. The decline is due mainly to the installation of district heating, use of new fuels with a lower sulphur content and reduced emissions from processing industry.

The long term trend when it comes to nitrogen-dioxide concentrations is highly uncertain. Some 250 000 people are exposed at some time during a year to excessive concentrations of nitrogen dioxides. Road transport is the predominant source, especially in very busy streets.

Concentrations of soot have decreased sharply since the 1970s, while it is unclear whether concentrations of particles are increasing or decreasing. Concentrations of carcinogenic substances appear to have diminished between 1980 and 1990.

Ground-level ozone is a problem both in urban and rural areas in southern Sweden. Concentrations in the central parts of towns are lower than in the countryside, but even in certain urban areas the WHO limits are exceeded every summer.

Lead concentrations in air on heavily used roads were relatively high in the 1970s. Through a successive reduction in the lead content of petrol and of discharges from industry, atmospheric lead concentrations have been brought below the WHO limits even on roads with heavy traffic in Stockholm.

Noise is increasing in society owing to several factors. With respect to traffic noise in Swedish urban areas, the structure of town planning and of construction over the past 20-year period has changed in such a way to reduce the amount of traffic noise penetrating homes, although traffic has increased. Direct noise-protecting measures, such as the installation of triple glazing, setting up of noise-barrier planks and imposition of speed limits, have also contributed to the fact that fewer people now consider themselves as victims of noise disturbance from transport when they are inside their homes.

Through farsighted physical planning, many noise disturbances as well as other problems related to road and rail transport, airports, industries, motor sports and shooting-ranges can be reduced.

#### *Waste production, reuse and recycling*

The municipalities are responsible for providing practical options for collection of waste and for stimulating reuse and recycling within their territories. Special rules apply for particularly hazardous industrial waste. The annual quantity of household waste has increased slightly and the non-sector-specific industrial waste has decreased. The recycling rate is low in most cases. The bulk of industrial waste is deposited in an unsorted state and without gas recovery.

Household waste is largely deposited or incinerated: roughly 40 percent in each case. Only a tiny proportion - some 2 percent - of household waste is composted at present. Recycling of glass, aluminium cans, paper and batteries has highly increased the last ten years.

Hazardous waste arises mainly in industry. In recent years, the use of hazardous substances has increased in both households and industry. Strong efforts are made to get the hazardous waste sorted out and to have it treated in a special way separated from the general waste. These efforts have been successful. Oil waste accounts for a large proportion of the hazardous waste.

Reuse of sludge from municipal sewage works has varied widely over the years. In the mid-1980s some 45 percent was used in agriculture and 15 percent in green areas etc. The remainder was deposited. In the early 1990s, the reuse in agriculture was only about 30 percent.

#### *Preserving the cultural heritage*

To integrate the conservationist perspective into physical planning is an important challenge for the cultural heritage sector. The precautionary principle is a natural starting point in this work, reminding that access to the cultural



heritage in built-up areas as well as in the countryside contributes to the forming of cultural identity and a sense of being rooted and confident in ones local environment.

The radical conversion of many inner city areas that formed part of Swedish urbanisation, illustrates the importance of future developments better respecting the conditions and cultural qualifications of the existing built-up environment in each city or town as well as in rural areas. Such considerations must occur in early phases of the planning process. Swedish practices demonstrates that environmental impact assessments should include clear descriptions and evaluations of cultural values that are at stake in each particular case. The strong demand to support the planning process with data and knowledge concerning the cultural heritage, provides an inspiring task that could largely contribute to a more sustainable urban development.

### **5.3 Some trends in Swedish urban experience**

#### *Transport and the structure of urban areas*

The liberty given to people by the massive introduction of the private car in Sweden during the decades after the second world war, gave freedom to choose places of living, work and services free from previous restrictions demanding "closeness". In rural areas this development had mostly positive consequences. In urban settlements the new options for the location of housing, workplaces and services added to a drastic increase in the need for transport.

Free use of the private car, not only in the countryside and in smaller conurbations, but in cities and towns all over Sweden, has been a prerequisite in municipal urban planning from the mid 1960s up till now. Physical planning standards for the layout of built-up areas have separated the use of land for development between residential uses, commercial and public service-functions, industry, traffic and recreation, and provided access to areas of different function through systems of roads, often surrounded by strips of undeveloped land. From the 1960s and onwards the National Road Administration in co-operation with municipal councils has carried out a massive investment programme for by-pass roads around central parts of towns and cities, aiming to reduce the pressures from car traffic on central areas. The investments have been financed via the national state budget.

The thinning out of the Swedish townscape and the increased share of building development and housing taking place in peripheral areas and in scattered settlements, is partly a result of Swedish transport and housing policies. In the late 1960s and the early 1970s, expansion of often large multi-family housing estates occurred both in peripheral locations and close to the city center. During the same period and thereafter, industrial sites in central urban areas were often abandoned for new sites in the periphery, allowing industry to utilise modern transport concepts. The growing need of office space for the public and private service sector was accommodated partly by redevelopment of inner-city land,

partly by peripheral development. Built-up areas expanded into an urban region, leaving a lot of undeveloped land next to and intermingled with developed land.

Looking at a map of a Swedish city or town, one will find a high proportion of workplaces centrally located and a large share of housing in the outskirts of town, resulting in large scale transport movements, especially in peak hours. Public transport is mostly carried out by bus. The low density, peripheral areas will most probably have no practicable public transport at all. Only in the large cities one will find well functioning tram systems (in Stockholm the subway) supplementing the bus system.

Previous land use planning and transport policies have led to excessive travel by car in our cities and their immediate surroundings. Especially in larger cities and in the metropolitan areas, such practices are not sustainable, causing growing congestion, noise, acid rain and largely contributing to the risk of global warming. As the private car is regarded a precious part of individual freedom, necessary changes must ensure options to use the car for purposes and destinations where accessibility with other attractive means cannot be offered. Car dependency in large cities can only be reduced by the combined effect of road pricing, land use planning and transport policies. Patterns of land use and traffic management measures should be promoted that reduces the need for using the car on a regular every-day basis, particularly for reproductive functions.

### *Urban infrastructure*

Urban infrastructure systems are developed in response to the needs of people, which reflect earlier decisions on the localisation of housing, jobs and services. The priorities of people and institutions that use, run and build up the systems, as far as the economic and legislative framework will allow, determines the conditions for change and for choosing alternative directions for development of infrastructure technology.

There has been a policy of general public water supply in Sweden since the 1870s. Sweden has a relatively abundant supply of water - approximately half of the Swedes receive their supply of water from natural or artificial subsoil water. The systems of water mains are of high quality and provide good distribution alternatives in the case of a line and/or an operational break-down. The sources of water supply however, are vulnerable and most municipalities have no alternative plans for water supply, should ordinary sources fail.

Almost all Swedes are connected to some sort of sewage system, where sewage usually is purified in several steps. A massive expansion of waste water treatment plants has occurred in most cities and towns in recent decades, resulting in the reduction of pollution in lakes, rivers and in the sea. Many surface waters have again become fit for swimming, and fish-species often have returned to previously polluted waters.

Although the environmental impacts of discharges of waste water from urban areas has substantially decreased, eutrophication problems in inland waters and in the sea have not been eliminated, which calls for continued efforts to reduce discharges of nutrients. At the present stage when the principle of best available technology has been implemented in practically all urban areas, cost effectiveness has become an important instrument when assessing what measures should be taken to further reduce discharges of pollutants.

A key factor in order to reach sustainability is conservation of natural resources, e. g. nutrients, energy and water. In this aspect phosphorus occupies a place apart, being both essential to all living organisms and a truly finite natural resource. Therefore an important strategic issue within the sewage treatment sector is to achieve recycling of phosphorus by the use of sludge. Very tough national quality standards on sludge have been set to enable use of sludge in agriculture without risking any harm to man even in a thousand year perspective. To meet these standards a variety of measures have to be taken, e. g. restrictions on what type of waste water other than municipal waste water that can be connected to the sewerage system and exchange of non-desirable chemicals in industry and society. The future potential for recycling in this manner is a 90-95 percent recovery of phosphorus in municipal waste water.

From 1970 up to 1990 the number of district heating facilities in Swedish municipalities increased from 24 to more than 150. Under the same period more than 50 billion SEK have been invested in different heat distribution systems and roughly the same amount is estimated to have been invested in block central systems. Reasons behind this massive development are Sweden's previously very strong oil dependency, the need for environmental improvement in urban areas and economic advantages compared to alternative heating systems. 60 percent of Sweden's heat and hot water is delivered through hot water pipes.

#### *Developing the qualities of the built environment*

Swedish cities and urban areas are spacious and green, built-up areas and open space providing opportunities for a rewarding human life through facilities for education, for social and cultural activities and for outdoor recreation.

To strengthen the long-term competitiveness of Swedish cities and urban areas and to ensure rich and diversified living environments, concerted efforts are now required to protect and manage the cultural, social and environmental qualities of built-up environments and of parks and adjoining, undeveloped rural lands. Bringing physical planning into line with new and tough requirements for clean technical systems in our urban areas will make it possible to maintain biological diversity and to protect monuments and buildings as the priceless parts of our cultural heritage they are.

## 5.4 Urban networks and spatial development

### *The urban labour market networks*

Compared to most other European countries, Sweden is characterized by a low population density and by long distances between a large number of small, medium-sized and larger conurbations. Most local labour markets are too small to offer a diversity of job opportunities or specialised cultural and educational functions. Communities with only one or two major enterprises are vulnerable to changes on the global and regional markets. Furthermore, persons with managerial or other specialised skills, requiring an academic training, are difficult to attract and to keep in communities, which cannot offer a reasonable variety of opportunities. The transport and communication network therefore has critical importance.

The National Board of Housing, Building and Planning, commissioned by the Ministry of the Environment, has analysed the prospects for the future of the Swedish settlement structure and has presented its findings in the study "Sweden 2009 - A National Vision", presently under debate in Sweden. The study characterises Swedish settlement structure today as 24 urban "islands" floating around in a vast sea of woods, rural areas and minor and peripheral communities. Six of the 24 "islands" are university regions with 40 percent of the country's total population. The other 18 "islands", with in all some 30 percent of the population, have other kinds of higher education, like a teachers college or a polytechnic.

The study proposes that the 24 urban islands be connected to each other through a "String of beads network", by regionally based high-speed, rail-bound public transport. In this way, local housing and employment markets would increase in size significantly, and also include large parts of the country's minor communities and rural settlements.

Regardless of the technical solution chosen for implementing the vision of the "String of Beads Network", the vision itself has high relevance, as it aims at strengthening the capability of trade and industry in the dispersed Swedish settlement structure to compete successfully in the regional and global economy, by significantly widening housing and labour markets and directly and indirectly increasing the accessibility of jobs as well as of social and cultural services for some 90 percent of the Swedish population. Rapid development of modern information technology would further support the long-term viability of the existing settlement structure, offering computerized access to working places as a complement to the in-person presence, offered by rail-bound public transport. There is reason to believe that the on-going discussion will mobilize political interest all over Sweden.

## 5.5 Development of new land use strategies

In 1987, twenty years of work in Sweden on national physical planning was codified in the Natural Resources Act, providing comprehensive and fundamental rules for the management of land and water resources and of the physical environment in general. The Act is to be applied in all matters concerning changes in the use of land and water areas, where a license or permit is required according to twelve special acts. The main objective is to stimulate a suitable use and a good management, from a long term public interest point of view, of available land and water resources with due respect for the environment and to give a proper frame for development.

The act defines long term public interests to be observed in planning, lays down requirements for mandatory Government scrutiny of particularly important industrial or infrastructure developments and prescribes fundamental requirements for the application of environmental impact assessments in connection with the scrutiny of land use matters. The criteria in the Natural Resources Act for definition of national interests is fundamental for delegation to local authorities of powers in land use decisions. The County Administrative Boards are responsible for supervising the application of the law, matters concerning national interests often in the end being scrutinized by the Government.

The 1987 Planning and Building Act, primarily regulating public control of building activities and the physical planning system at municipal and regional levels, is the key act within the very decentralized Swedish spatial planning system. Municipal comprehensive plans, though not legally binding, are the main instruments for guiding development, and for explaining the public interests to be observed in the scrutiny of applications for changes in the use of land and water areas. Land use changes contradictory to municipal detailed development plans or area regulations, having gained legal force, are not allowable according to any legislation - "the municipal planning monopoly".

Urban development has a strong position in Swedish land policy. According to the Natural Resources Act however, good arable land may be used for buildings and structures only if this is needed because of essential public interests which otherwise cannot be satisfied. Further, there are restrictions for urban development on land which is valuable from ecological, cultural, industrial, military etc. viewpoints, is of importance for reindeer breeding or fisheries or else contain natural resources of particular importance or are needed for infrastructure development of national or regional interest. Special considerations must be taken regarding objects of national interest and areas of great value from the national viewpoint. A strong legal protection has also been given for land within 100 metres from most shorelines.

Environmental issues are given higher political priority than previously in Swedish spatial planning. More consideration and better legal protection is for example given to monuments, buildings and areas of high historical or cultural

value. If sufficient regard is not given to objects of national interest, the County Administrative Board or the Government can cancel a municipal adoption of a plan.

To strengthen the role of planning as a measure towards sustainable urban development, the Swedish Government has recognized that there is a need for new and more comprehensive land use strategies. Such strategies should support the implementation of the following long term goals for sustainable urban development:

- Promotion of a long term land use pattern and transport and settlement structure in Swedish cities and urban regions, reducing the need for everyday travel by private car and strengthening the position of public transport.
- Support for a rich and living everyday environment where people can feel safe and secure. The built-up environment must be treated with great respect for existing qualities, allowing for the preservation of both uniqueness and diversity. Additions to the built-up area and to its infrastructure must take into account the interests of easy access from homes and workplaces to parks and green areas and to the adjoining countryside and recognize that opportunities for social interaction, cultural events and community services and the availability of workplaces and job opportunities are fundamental qualities in the urban environment.
- Modification of the technical infrastructure in order to at the same time create an efficient structure from socio-economic point of view and minimize the environmental impacts. New technical solutions based on the ecocycles concept should be advocated, observing the urban-rural relationships and the impacts on adjoining cultivated and natural landscapes.
- Promotion of a broader public participation in decisions important to the future of Swedish urban environments and human settlements.

Through recent amendments, the Government has incorporated these goals in the Planning and Building Act. A fundamental goal for planning is to promote sustainable land use patterns and settlement structures. Green areas are elements of equal value to built-up areas and transport infrastructure. The natural and cultural qualities of existing built-up areas and of the adjoining landscape must be the starting point for all considerations concerning new land use. Social, economic, cultural and environmental impacts of major development or infrastructure projects on existing land use and on existing built-up structures should be given particular consideration during the consultation process for each specific project.

## **5.6 The role of urban planning**

Up till now urban planning has been based mainly on the concept of preparing land for urban development and expansion. In Sweden as in many other European countries a new phase in urbanisation with reduced production of new buildings has meant a shift of interest towards management, conservation and careful additions to the existing built-up environment. Efforts towards sustainable urban development therefore will focus not only on transforming the technical infrastructure to ecocycles demands, but on the preservation and enhancement of cultural, aestehical and social values in the urban areas. Urban planning obviously will have an important role to play in any well-directed urban development policy.

In its recent proposals for amendments to the Planning and Building Act, the Government has reinforced the position of the conservation interests in the preparation of detailed development plans. To develop the dialogue between the municipality and citizens and other concerned parties, regulations on public participation - constituting a main element in the Act - also were strengthened.

## **5.7 Instruments for implementation, the Land Data Bank**

### *Land acquisition*

A major reform of the Swedish real estate property code was launched in 1972. The Land Survey Act defined the powers and procedures of the Real Property Formation Authority, the major roles being cadastral surveys and property registration. The decision making process of the authority, normally consisting of one land surveyor, is very flexible. The main features are:

- the application, for instance for a partition or a division of land,
- meeting with all concerned property owners,
- consultations with planning and other authorities,
- investigations, valuations and negotiations done by the Authority,
- final decision-making.

The Authority has power to decide on compulsory acquisition of land needed for joint facilities or for the forming of a plot according to an adopted plan. The Authority also establishes the value of the land and decides on the compensation for it. This means that land acquisition is quicker and far cheaper than the traditional court process.

### *Development of joint facilities*

The municipality is normally responsible for the development of joint facilities in urban areas, such as streets, water and sewage, green park areas etc. In rural areas, in villages and in some cases also in urban areas, the municipality can decide that the property owners shall be responsible for implementing a particular joint facility. The municipality or any property owner concerned, can

then apply to the local Real Property Formation Authority to establish a joint-property management association to build and maintain the joint facilities that as a rule are outlined in a detailed development plan.

The prerequisites for forming such an association are

- that the proposed facility is of essential importance to the property, and
- that the total value of the property will increase more than the costs for participating.

These prerequisites are normally met in the case of joint roads, water and sewerage supplies and many others. The necessary funds for the implementation, are levied by the association from participating properties. The regulations were billed in the Joint Facilities Act in 1973. The act has been frequently and successfully used as an efficient, quick, cheap and democratic instrument for creating necessary infrastructure when neither the Government nor the municipality have the financial or organisational means to provide support.

#### *Access to data for planning*

Much background data for planning has been computerized during the last 20 years. A major reform of computerizing the land register as well as the real property register to a Land Data Bank started in the mid 1970s and is now fulfilled for the whole country. The land register, containing information on i. a. ownership, leaseholds, and encumbrances such as mortgages, is of particular interest to banks and other credit institutions. The real property register contains co-ordinates for the central points of the parcels and offers considerable flexibility in information retrieval. The Swedish Land Data Bank makes it possible to have quick and cheap access to information about all properties, covering the complete surface of Sweden, such as land owners and addresses, easements, encumbrances, land control and zoning regulations, sales prices, area, building and centre co-ordinates and much more. Access to data is guaranteed by the constitutional right of public access to official records. The register is updated through compulsory registration of ownership. The development of the Land Data Bank continues with the establishment of a building register and the linking of the land data to digital cadastral property maps in the scale range of 1:500 to 1:20 000.

#### **5.8 Priorities**

The concept of sustainable urban development implies concern for meeting the economical, social, cultural and ecological problems of today's world with positive alternatives aiming at *a good living environment* for all in Swedish cities, urban areas and human settlements at large. The call for a strengthening of the environmental focus in urban management and planning is a common denominator for the city models now being discussed in Sweden.



The implementation of the long term goals for sustainable urban development introduced in the recent amendments to the Planning and Building Act will have crucial importance to the future of Swedish cities. The goals deal with sustainable land use patterns, the need to reduce every day travel by private car, to strengthen the position of public transport, to promote urban environmental qualities, to encourage ecocycles concepts in urban infrastructure and to further a broader public participation in urban management and planning.

To support sustainable economic growth, Swedish cities must increase their attractiveness to people and to enterprises. A city with high environmental qualities, with equal and safe living conditions for all, good chances for jobs and education, low criminality, high level of citizen participation and where the interests of children, women and elderly or disabled persons really count, would fulfil fundamental requirements for attractiveness.

To adapt to and function well in a globalized economy, the Swedish settlement structure should be strengthened through improvements in the transport and communication systems, increasing the size of local housing and employment markets and improving the accessibility of jobs, of education, of qualified social and cultural services and of national, regional and global information networks.

The living environment of small towns and rural settlements have qualities that fulfil several requirements for attractive human settlements. Spatial planning should analyse urban-rural relationships by identifying the role of different parts of the regional territory in the development of the ecocycles oriented industrial society. The role and prospects of rural communities largely depends on local creativity and ability to trade upon local resources and assets. The sound management of land and water resources in urban and rural areas should be promoted through physical planning, striking a proper balance between development and conservation interests, while preserving the values of the natural and cultural environment.

Participatory local democracy should be promoted, through continued Local Agenda 21 work, incorporating as appropriate the commitments resulting from Habitat II.

## **Part C: CHALLENGES TO THE YEAR 2 000**

### **1. STRATEGIES AND POLICIES**

#### **1.1 A modern, human and eco-cycles adapted industrial society**

More than eight out of ten Swedes live in settlements with more than 200 inhabitants. 55 percent live in 110 cities or towns with more than 10 000 inhabitants. Most Swedish urban areas are small and scattered in a European comparison.

The built-up environment - i.e. human settlements with housing and other facilities, parks and green spaces, traffic routes and other communication facilities and technical supply systems - form the backbone of the welfare society and of people's everyday lives. It is obvious that the very way buildings, infrastructure and the built-up environment at large is organized has fundamental social, economic, cultural and environmental impacts.

With one housing unit for every two inhabitants, the general housing shortage in Sweden belongs to the past. Almost no households are crowded and only one percent of the units are not fully modern. The most important challenge for Swedish housing policy today is the provision of housing that is accessible for all in such a way that integration is promoted and social, ethnic and economic segregation is offset. The housing capital must also be safeguarded and new ways of housing financing be found.

Recent Swedish membership in the European Union and the determination of the Swedish government to restore public finances and confidence in the Swedish economy, will influence options for action in the short and medium time future. Swedish Habitat priorities must be in line with the economic and financial framework as well as with the long term imperatives for sustainable development. The demands of an emerging multi-cultural society need particular attention.

It is in the homes and the neighbourhoods of cities, towns, villages and dispersed settlements that the expectations must be met for decent living conditions, for adequate working places and for access to education and jobs, for human development, for a good and healthy living environment and for chances to participate in social life and in public affairs. The visions of empowered women and men and of an enabling environment supporting creativity and productivity should inspire all efforts in urban management and planning.

New forms of energy conservation, of ecocycles promoting technologies and of changes in human lifestyles will be necessary in the next decades, in order to reduce the consumption of natural resources in the industrialized parts of the world, thereby offering hope for the sustainable development of human

settlements in all parts of the world. Present affluent societies must lead the way from unsustainable practices by proving in the concrete shelter and settlements context that a truly modern and human, eco-cycles adapted industrial society is within reach.

Swedish national Habitat policies must establish strategies for action to meet these challenges. Local initiatives, bottom up approaches and experience from the ground will be of fundamental importance. The main strategy concerns the enablement of the local level to take on its responsibility for adequate shelter and sustainable urban development, by providing legal preconditions and political support to the local authorities, to the private sector and to local actors in their efforts to develop methods and technologies for the modernisation of Sweden as an integrated part of the global community. Fundamental changes in economic policies and in sectoral policies will be needed at national level. They will presumably form part of an international transformation process, where the UN system could play an important role.

## **1.2 Eight fundamental challenges**

Eight policy areas have been identified as representing the most fundamental and important challenges in Sweden in the short and medium time future. Recognizing macro-economic efforts to balance public sector spending, these priority issues must be effectively addressed to ensure adequate shelter for all and a sustainable development of human settlements in Sweden:

1. *General housing policies under new financial constraints*, safeguarding adequate shelter for all, counteracting segregation, meeting the needs of elderly and disabled people and of otherwise special groups, empowering the tenants and providing financial support to the existing housing stock and to the production of new housing.
2. *Adaptation of buildings and of built-up areas* to eco-cycles and energy management demands, to the provision of healthy environments through noise reduction and strict chemicals control and to the needs of elderly people and people with disabilities or with other special demands.
3. *Satisfying living conditions in distressed residential areas* in larger Swedish cities, through more efficient use of existing resources, more focus on children and adolescents, better interaction between parties concerned and innovative special projects and new legislation.
4. *Better integration of immigrants* through new strategies adapted to existing conditions in different parts of Sweden.
5. *Consolidating the position of Swedish municipalities* through new principles for the allocation of national funding and further legislation to safeguard independent local decision making.

6. *Increasing the attractiveness of Swedish settlements* for people and enterprises, through efforts that create and defend rich and human living environments in built-up areas, strengthen the urban-rural relationships, promote information technology introduction and reinforce networks between towns, villages and dispersed settlements on the one hand and larger social and cultural centers, universities and nodes for regional and global trade on the other.

7. Developing *land use strategies for an ecocycles adaptation of Swedish cities*, reducing the unsustainable need for everyday commuting by car over vast distances and promoting multipurpose use of undeveloped land to safeguard biological diversity, contribute to the cultural, aesthetic, recreational and climatic qualities of the city and allowing biological production and the active recycling of water and of other natural resources within economic distances from built-up areas.

8. *Strengthening of participatory local democracy* through continued work on Local Agenda 21, incorporating commitments from Habitat II at local level into Local Habitat Commitments to the year 2000.

### **1.3 Policy coordination**

The assessments and priorities of Swedish experience summarized above recognize that Swedish efforts in shaping sustainable homes in an urbanizing world must respond to the need for new strategies and for the sometimes radical adjustment of traditional policies. The challenges are components of and will involve several interdependent policy areas. Matters related to housing policies, to building and to the built-up environment, to the economic, social, cultural and environmental qualities of cities and urban areas, to transport, physical planning, land use, and environmental policies, to health and welfare, to immigration policies, to local government, to regional development and to the protection against natural and manmade disasters are all of importance in the Habitat context.

The Minister of Housing and Energy, being responsible for the coordination in central government of Swedish preparatory activities for HABITAT II, has initiated discussions on priorities and commitments of particular relevance to the sustainable management of human settlements in Sweden. The challenges presented in this chapter give an overview of priority issues to ensure the sustainability of homes and of living environments in Sweden in the coming years.

The Ministry of the Environment, being responsible for Physical Planning and for Environmental Policies, co-ordinates follow-up activities to the Rio Conference on Environment and Development. The Ministry of Health and Welfare has the corresponding responsibility with regard to the Copenhagen Social Summit.

Sustainable development efforts in human settlements will be successful only if all sectors of society participate actively. Apart from the Ministries previously mentioned, important contributions are provided by the Ministry of Culture, being responsible for Cultural Environmental Policies, the Ministry of Transport and Communications, being responsible for the promotion of environmentally adapted transport systems, the Ministry of Labour, being responsible for Regional Development and Immigration policies, and the Ministry of National Defence, being responsible for preventive measures against natural and manmade disasters. It should be noted that the Swedish Ministry of Finance at present is responsible for the coordination of matters related to Local Governments.

## **2. SWEDISH PRIORITY ISSUES**

### **2.1 General housing policies under new financial constraints**

In March 1995 a public commission - the Housing Policy Commission - was appointed with the task of formulating the goals of a continued Social Housing Policy within new budgetary limits and to propose adequate means for implementation. Among urgent issues in such a policy the Government has indicated that adequate housing must be available to everyone in forms that promote integration and counteract economic, ethnical or social segregation. The commission shall present its final report before October 1, 1996.

An important task will be to find ways to secure sustainable development of the existing housing stock and to finance the construction of new housing needed in the future. The national financing of housing may not increase but must follow the programme for stabilization of the Swedish economy. Instead, the housing credit market must find better ways to operate in order to improve competitiveness and flexibility. Private capital in housing production is also called for, e.g. by new forms for household home saving and by provisions for the non-profit municipal housing companies financing needs.

In the future, housing provision will be a matter of improving existing housing areas, through additions of services and other amenities in order to provide for new needs, but also in order to break mono-functional land use and segregation between different groups. Segregation that is let to go too far can easily become perpetual. It is necessary to break the vicious circle in order to improve the feeling of security, confidence and understanding among residents and thus to re-create solidarity. This obligation is one of the most important issues for all sectors of society.

The Commission is also to review the housing provision role of the municipality, and if needed propose new administrative measures, especially with regard to counteracting economic, ethnic and social segregation. Housing must be provided for young persons and other newcomers on the housing market. The elderly and other persons with special needs must be guaranteed

good living conditions. New ways for residents to improve their neighbourhoods should also be sought.

## **2.2 Adaptation of buildings and of built-up areas**

The process of adaptation of buildings and of built-up areas to the demands of the eco-cycles oriented industrial society must continue. The slow process of change in the building stock calls for long term targets and reliable data for decisions. An increased use of renewable sources of energy, utilizing solar radiation directly or indirectly is a prerequisite for sustainable long term energy provision.

Efforts to improve the indoor climate of buildings, to eliminate harmful components in building products and to reduce noise in buildings and built-up areas must continue. Recycling of building materials and re-use of building components must be radically improved. The accessibility to housing, working places, public buildings, public places and public transport must be improved, fully taking into account the UN standard rules regarding people with disabilities. All measures have to be made with concern and respect for existing social and cultural environmental values. Special efforts are needed to secure the right of adequate housing for elderly people and people with disabilities, ensuring freedom and integrity and satisfying the daily need for support and assistance.

## **2.3 Living conditions in distressed residential areas**

Housing segregation and the adjustment of immigrants into the Swedish society are at focus for a public commission appointed in March 1995. The Commission is to find ways to improve living conditions in distressed housing areas of the metropolitan cities of Stockholm, Göteborg and Malmö. Compared to European and US standards these housing areas, produced during the sixties and early seventies as part of the "one million dwellings programme" and often situated in suburban zones, seem to be quite well off when it comes to technical standards and spaciousness. The most characteristic feature is high representation of immigrants and unprivileged households. All of them have an extremely high proportion of social assistance recipients and early retirement pensioners. Better off households continuously tend to move out to more attractive areas leaving behind those inhabitants which have weaker resources.

The task of the Commission is to propose, in close contact with those concerned in the three cities, measures that will improve conditions and effectively utilize various resources and possibilities which can be used to assist developments, particularly with regard to children and adolescents growing up in difficult circumstances. The commission also has the mandate to initiate and carry out specific projects in accordance with the stated policy. The commission shall present its final report before July 1, 1997.

## **2.4 Better integration of immigrants**

Immigration is one of the main factors contributing to changing conditions for human settlements in Sweden. More than one million of almost nine million Swedes are born abroad or have one or both parents being born abroad. During a few decades Sweden has been transformed from a society with a few ethnical groups to a society with more than hundred languages and nationalities. According to the "all of Sweden Strategy" all Swedish municipalities are to share the responsibility for measures of introduction and integration of immigrants into the Swedish society. In practice however many immigrants tend to settle in municipalities where countrymen already have settled. Many of these municipalities find big difficulties in providing the immigrants with necessary means for integration and self support. Some municipalities face exceptional costs which could lead to difficulties in the provision of services to the citizens at large.

In November 1994 a public Commission was appointed with the task of readdressing the present Swedish policies with regard to the integration of immigrants in Sweden. The Commission is to propose measures to increase the participation of immigrants in public affairs and to strengthen the position of the Swedish language, particularly among immigrant women and children. To avoid further concentration of immigrants into certain distressed areas, efforts must be considered how to increase the attractiveness of these areas to other groups. The future relevance of the "all of Sweden strategy" should be re-examined considering the actual opportunities for integration of immigrants that seem to be possible in municipalities with different characteristics. The commission shall report by 2 April 1996.

The long-term parts of the Commissions work must be supplemented by immediate measures. 125 million SEK has been provided for efforts in housing estates with particularly large shares of immigrants, particularly in the metropolitan areas. These immediate measures mainly aim at increasing labour force participation and to strengthen job competence among immigrants living in these areas, but also to increase everyday contacts between immigrants and other Swedes, in order to encourage the learning of Swedish and improve chances for admission on the Swedish labour market.

## **2.5 Consolidating the position of Swedish local governments**

Municipalities and county councils are responsible for substantial parts of Swedish welfare, including health care, social care and education. As local government mainly is financed by taxes and is governed in democratic form, there are guarantees that welfare is available to everyone and that citizens influence the allocation of resources. Local authorities are extremely dependant upon stable conditions in the national economy.

The role of the State is mainly to establish national goals and give general conditions for their implementation, mainly through legislation. Because of the

size of the local government sector, central government must be able to influence local government consumption and financing through a financial framework for local government activity. From 1995 the Minister of Finance is responsible within the Swedish Government for local government affairs. Local government independence and the ambitions of local government to comply with national goals are prerequisites for national policies aiming at consolidating the position of Swedish local governments.

A new system for allocation of taxation income will be introduced, covering all Swedish local authorities, the aim being to create equal financial conditions at local and regional level, recognizing all factors that determine demand for local government services. Efforts will continue to develop, modernize and renew local government services and to strengthen conditions for local and regional democratic governance.

## **2.6 Increasing the attractiveness of Swedish settlements**

To strengthen the long-term competitiveness of Swedish settlements and to support human development and health, concerted efforts are needed to protect and manage the cultural, social and environmental qualities of built-up environments and of parks and adjoining rural lands, thereby ensuring rich and diversified living environments. Swedish low-density and green towns and settlements offer good opportunities for sustainable urban development, which is supportive also to a sustainable rural development. Bringing physical planning into line with new and tough requirements for clean technical systems in Swedish settlements will make it possible to maintain biological diversity and to protect monuments and buildings being priceless parts of our cultural heritage.

The dispersed settlement structure represents both problems and challenges for the future. The positive values - life style, local job opportunities, tradition, natural environment and cultural heritage - must be safeguarded. Access to diversified working places, to qualified education and to social and cultural centers are a prerequisite for sustainable development of Swedish settlements. Specific measures such as those proposed in the Vision Sweden 2009 for strengthening the transport and communication networks between Swedish settlements and larger social and cultural centers, universities and nodes for regional and global trade, need to be further discussed and conditions for implementation be analyzed with due consideration to local and sub-regional conditions.

## **2.7 Land-use strategies for the eco-cycles adaptation of Swedish cities**

The ecocycles adaptation of Swedish small towns and dispersed settlements, being green and integrated into the adjoining rural landscape, will offer special challenges and opportunities. Larger cities with a population of more than 100 000 inhabitants will demand somewhat different approaches. Spatial planning must here promote land use patterns that reduces the unsustainable



need for using the private car on a day-to-day basis for reproductive functions. Inventive solutions for public transport must be combined with land use adjustments, supporting multi-cellular growth and multi-functional neighbourhood development.

Special efforts are needed to protect green areas and safeguard biological diversity city-wide. Even big cities in Sweden offer their inhabitants fairly easy access to the adjoining countryside with forests and farmland. This quality should be preserved for the future. The National City Park of Stockholm, protected by law in 1995, illustrates the potential of preserving historical landscapes in central parts of big cities, allowing a green stroke through the built-up city out to the adjoining countryside, thus contributing to the cultural, aesthetical, recreational and climatic qualities of the city.

Options for biological production for food and energy purposes must be ensured within and in the vicinity of the city. Biological degradation of waste products such as sewage, ashes, sludge and compost must occur on land and water areas within economic distances from the built-up area. Regional and local planning authorities should develop adequate land use strategies for the eco-cycles adaptation of Swedish settlements in line with these proposals.

## **2.8 Strengthening of participatory local democracy**

More than 52 percent of Swedes are active in some association or organisation aiming at satisfying individual or common interests. Fewer citizens today choose to join political parties or popular movements. Instead many citizens search new ways of influencing society, such as participating in action groups, networks, demonstrations etc.

In April 1995, the Government appointed a Commission to analyze the situation with regard to citizens influence and participation in the development of society and to propose measures that would strengthen co-operation between citizens, organisations and governments at all levels. The effects of changed citizen preferences on efforts of democratic renewal, the role of information technology in the development of democratic processes, regional differences in peoples real influence and participation, as well as measures to strengthen the options of immigrants to exercise influence and participation at the neighbourhood level, are key issues for the Commission, which is to report to the Government by 1 October 1996.

## **Part D: INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

### **1. RECENT CONSIDERATIONS ON DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION**

#### **1.1 Five goals for Swedish development cooperation**

The overall goal for Swedish development co-operation is to improve living conditions for people living in poverty in developing countries and in countries with economies in transition. The Parliament has established five specific goals supporting this overall goal:

- Sustainable economic growth,
- the levelling out of economic and social disparities,
- economic and political independence,
- the growth of a democratic culture and
- far-sighted management with natural resources and concern for the environment.

#### **1.2 Swedish development assistance after UNCED**

In May 1994, the Swedish Foreign Ministry assigned a Working Party to give proposals on how the decisions made at the UN Conference in Rio on Environment and Development (UNCED) and how global environmental considerations at large could be integrated into Swedish Development Assistance. The report "Sustainable Development Assistance - Swedish Development Assistance after UNCED" was published in November 1994 and was distributed to a wide circle of interested parties for comments. Swedish authorities and experts responsible for international co-operation and development assistance generally agreed with the analysis and proposals presented in the report.

#### *Recommendations*

The Report recommends that Sweden shall continue being one of the leading countries in the world when it comes to assistance for sustainable development, and that such assistance must form part of a co-ordinated Swedish foreign policy aiming at peace, security and democracy.

The Swedish resource base seems reasonably adequate, universities, government agencies, municipalities, industry, private consultants and others having both experience and competence. Swedish technologies are generally well adjusted to environmental and energy-saving considerations. Methods for public resource management and environmental control are successfully applied in important sectors. To be credible, Sweden should share its own experience in international co-operation and assistance aiming at sustainable development.

The precautionary principle, the polluter pays principle and the principle of environmental impact assessments should be carefully considered in Swedish development assistance.

Training of development co-operation administrators in matters related to sustainable development should take place at all levels.

The options for bilateral agreements on mutual co-operation for sustainable development between Sweden and some developing countries should be closely considered.

The existing goals in Swedish development assistance of combating poverty should be strengthened and adjusted in accordance with Agenda 21.

Sweden should in its development assistance put stronger emphasis on long-term, poverty-directed and disaster-preventing measures.

#### *Critical areas of action*

The report suggests that the following criteria should be applied in the analysis of critical areas of action:

- \* poverty level
- \* number of people concerned
- \* sensitivity of the environment
- \* effects on basic needs of people living in poverty
- \* availability of Swedish know-how
- \* international commitments

For Swedish development assistance the following sectors are of special relevance when it comes to assistance for sustainable development:

- \* water resources, water use management
- \* sustainable agriculture
- \* marine resources, coastal zone management
- \* urban management, urbanisation
- \* energy, transports

These sectors are believed to be fundamental for survival and for the chances to promote better living conditions for people living in poverty. They cover the supply of food and water and the resource base needed, as well as environmental problems related to the urbanisation process, above all waste management, sewage and pollution problems.

#### *Further efforts needed*

The report asks both for increases in and partly new directions for Swedish development assistance. Further efforts should be made to manage flows of

organic materials and to close eco-cycles in agriculture, in coastal zones and in urban areas.

In the Habitat field specifically, programs should be developed for assistance in capacity-building in cities and urban areas, to develop human and technological means of managing environmental and developmental aspects of rapid urbanisation processes.

Bilateral financial support should be geared at user-technologies, preferably in the fields of energy, public transport, water, telecommunications, waste management and sewage treatment.

Roughly one third of Swedish development assistance is geared at multilateral co-operation. The report proposes that Sweden should actively work for the general application on the ground in all World Bank activities of the World Bank Policy for Sustainable Development. Special efforts should be made to strengthen the environmental capacities of the World Bank Nordic-Baltic office.

As a new member of the European Union it is urgent that Sweden actively takes part in the design of the Union's development assistance policies as well as in specific programs of development assistance, promoting strong emphasis on sustainable development.

### **1.3 Reformed structure for Swedish development cooperation**

From July 1 1995 five Swedish government agencies responsible for different aspects of international co-operation and development assistance were integrated into one body. BITS, Sandö U-centrum, Sarec, SIDA and SwedeCorp now are parts of the new Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), responsible for assistance and co-operation geared at developing countries as well as at countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

The new Sida is organized to ensure increased efficiency and better results in Swedish development assistance. Sida wishes to function as a catalyst and not as the doer. Swedish assistance will rely upon the will of partner countries to sincerely promote change and to be prepared to devote substantial resources of their own. The Swedish contribution will be know-how and capital, the know-how provided by Sida's 1500 partners among industry, universities, government agencies, municipalities and non-governmental organisations.

Swedish development assistance shall contribute to the raising of living standards among people living in poverty. The main roads are believed to be assistance promoting democratisation and sustainable development. The intentions and proposals presented in the report "Assistance for Sustainable Development" referred earlier, will serve as guidelines to be implemented in the work of the new Sida.

Promoting democracy does not only mean supporting free elections. It will also mean supporting good governance, taking for granted by most Swedes; reliable police, impartial courts, free press and efficient public administration free of corruption.

Promoting sustainable development does not either fundamentally differ from what is being done in Sweden. It will mean strong support to education, research and training. It will mean supporting necessary infrastructure; telephone systems, energy supply, roads, railroads and ports. It will mean supporting free enterprises, trade and functioning capital markets.

The promotion of sustainable development will also mean efforts to promote human security, to liberate human resources and human creativity and to strengthen the position of women and children

All Swedish efforts towards development assistance should be designed to be in balance with nature. Environmental and social impacts will be carefully assessed and projects leading astray will be rejected.

In summary, Sweden through its development assistance wishes to give its fair share in the promotion of growth as an instrument to eradicate poverty and to create sustainable living environments for men, women and children in all parts of the world. When the Swedish assistance period is over, the partner country shall be able to carry on its work for sustainable development on its own.

Swedish development assistance is not unconditional. Reforms for increased democracy, for increased human equality and for strengthening of environmental considerations is clearly demanded. Conditions also apply for quality, time limits and results. Careful follow-up and monitoring will be carried out, mostly through external auditors. Immediate corrections will be asked for in case of mis-demeanour.

The new Sida organisation has been created to deliver a new type of development assistance, more comprehensive and more relying on co-operation. The resources from five previous independent agencies will be used and applied in co-operation efforts that are tailor-made and adjusted to the real needs and options of the partner countries in the promotion of democracy and of sustainable development.

The new Sida will be organized in five regional departments (Southern Africa, East and West Africa, Asia, Latin America and Central and Eastern Europe) and in five thematic departments (Democracy and Social Development; Infrastructure and Economic Co-operation; Natural Resources and Environment; Research; and Disaster prevention and Co-operation with NGOs). General Habitat issues, being part of several interdependent policy areas, is expected to be at focus in most regular work of the organisation aiming at sustainable development.

### *The urban development division*

Specific Habitat issues will be dealt with in the Urban Development Division within the Department for Infrastructure and Economic Co-operation. Being responsible for the development of competence, for covering research and development and for national and international co-operation in its field, the Urban Development Division has the following tasks:

- \* co-ordination of assistance to urban development
- \* main responsibility for multi-purpose assistance programs geared at individual cities
- \* urban planning and management, cadastre and property registration
- \* area-based assistance geared at distressed urban areas
- \* efforts in promotion of affordable housing
- \* urban infrastructure such as water, sewage, waste management and public transport

The following tasks of importance from a Habitat point of view are dealt with elsewhere in the new organisation, unless they form part of integrated Urban Development programmes:

- \* general urban management
- \* energy supply
- \* telecommunications
- \* roads, ports, railroads, transport
- \* industrial development, including the building industry
- \* business development in the informal sector
- \* health, education, welfare
- \* the green environment including water resources
- \* disaster prevention

The present urban project portfolio consists of 66 projects involving roughly 500 million SEK in development assistance and 300 million SEK in credits. The intention of the new organisation is that assistance geared at urban development will increase and focus on urban poverty, on urban environment and on urban management.

## **2.4 Towards an urban world**

### *Reasons for urban development assistance*

According to a recent Sida report, "Towards an urban world", the urgent needs in urban areas, the feasibility of solutions and the prospects for long term sustainability of human settlements justify assistance to urban development. Six specific reasons are mentioned in the report:

- 1) Recipient countries become more and more urban. The major population increase takes place in urban areas.

- 2) Poverty is being urbanized. Urban poverty is an underestimated problem that needs more attention.
- 3) Urban areas are major polluters and consumers of energy and natural resources. They are also the place where important ecological circuits are disrupted.
- 4) Major urban areas account for two thirds of the GNP in most countries. Improvement of urban functions, serving the urban economy is a strategic option for promoting economic growth.
- 5) Rural development is depending on well functioning urban markets. Cities and urban areas in their turn depend on the production capacities of rural areas. This interdependency between rural and urban areas justifies support to sustainable development in urban as well as rural areas.
- 6) Up till now far too little assistance has been aimed at improving living conditions and the sustainable functioning of cities. International assistance needs to focus more on efforts to manage urban environmental problems, to alleviate urban poverty and to improve urban functions and municipal institutions.

According to the Sida report, increased Swedish efforts in the field of urban development would be an effective measure in the alleviation of urban poverty, in the improvement of urban environments and in the promotion of economic growth. The Swedish resource base is well familiar with work aiming at sustainable urban development. The municipal sector is a potentially very useful source of expertise, which could be more involved in development cooperation in the future.

#### *Areas for urban development assistance*

In assisting sustainable urban development it would prove effective to combine activities that are mutually supporting. Urban activities and problems are interwoven and call for holistic approaches and integrated solutions. Institutional development, housing and infrastructure, grassroot financing, support to education and health are all needed. Social policy support to national and local governments may develop as a new assistance sector. The following areas for Swedish development assistance in the urban sector are identified:

##### *a) Support to local governments*

Swedish support should aim at capacity building and institutional development at municipal level in fields like tax collection and municipal finance, administration, urban planning, land registration, environmental control, waste management, traffic management, etc. "Twinning" of cities is one way of achieving this objective. Local government support will, however, be really meaningful only if it is combined with national administration support for the development of decentralisation policies and of necessary legal instruments for local action and decision making.

b) *Infrastructure*

Improved infrastructure is a key to sound urban development. Water, sanitation and drainage are usually the most fundamental needs, but power supply and local roads may also be critical bottle-necks for local development. Institutional development is often more important than huge investments and may include reorganisation and perhaps commercialisation of service organisations, revision of fees and fee collection to achieve cost recovery, improved management, organisation of operation and maintenance, etc.

c) *Housing*

The construction industry plays an important role in economic development and is able to employ large numbers of unskilled workers. Housing has fundamental importance in all programs for poverty alleviation. A direct and effective way to improve living conditions of urban people living in poverty is through integrated development programs, designed to meet the needs at the household level in selected settlements. Usual components are housing improvement, and local infrastructure like water and sanitation. Sometimes fundamental service facilities and measures to improve the environment are included. Loans, revolving funds and self-help programs are other features. The challenge is to create institutions that are capable to continue to implement such projects in a sustainable manner.

d) *Income generation*

Promotion of small-scale business and "micro enterprises" as well as other income generating programs like labour-intensive public works programs are important forms of urban poverty alleviation. Access to credits and training of the informal sector can also be seen as a long term strategy for micro-economic development.

e) *Banking for people living in poverty*

Conventional banks in developing countries are usually not interested in small scale clients. Normal people and small business have to turn to private money-lenders which tend to charge excessive interests. There are successful examples of "popular banks", which gives loans to the poor. These concepts are usually developed through NGOs, which sometimes develop into real banks. Particularly interesting are models that also allow saving and are designed to be sustainable. To provide the initial funds for such banking is an attractive form of development assistance.

f) *Health*

The differences in health and in the provision of health services between different urban settlements have not been sufficiently observed, as the urban dimension often is neglected in health assistance programs. Primary health care, health education, family planning etc. are sometimes not extended to unplanned and illegal settlements, which leaves large segments of the population deprived of basic health services.



g) *Education*

The same inequalities as for health services may also be found in education. Primary education, vocational training and adult education should be extended to the distressed urban and peri-urban areas. As the informal sector often represent 50-70 percent of urban employment there is a need for skills training that is specially designed for the needs of that sector.

h) *Research*

More urban studies are needed. Important research subjects are intra-urban differentials in health and training, informal sector economy, urban-rural interaction, urban agriculture and environmental issues. Research should be carried out in co-operation with local institutions and aim at building up local capacity.

i) *Social policy*

A new focus on urban poverty alleviation at household and individual levels may lead to a broader concept for support to the social sector.

Urban poverty alleviation and support to vulnerable groups as street children, disabled and aged people, etc., are obvious components of such social assistance.

*Actors in urban assistance*

The action in most cases has to take place at municipal level, and urban development assistance should ideally be channelled directly to that level. Local governments, municipalities, local authorities and institutions as well as local NGOs are the key actors. The role of the municipality should be emphasized and its capacity strengthened. The report notes that in many countries, decentralization has not reached far, and the national level cannot and should not be left out completely. Bilateral agreements are normally signed with the central government which would retain an overall responsibility.

Community-based poverty alleviation programs usually have to be implemented through NGOs and/or community-based organizations. Central governments are today more prepared than before to accept that NGOs implement development programs and use assistance funds. The development of a sustainable institutional framework may be a part of the project.

Beside local government institutions, private enterprises, commercial financial institutions as well as co-operatives and community organisations, are important actors in community based urban programs. The report concludes that assistance to urban development will require that the donor establish direct relations with the actors at the local level. The direct role of the central government in such programs will normally be limited.

### *Swedish and international resources*

The Swedish resource base for urban development is in general well developed. Swedish consultants, academics and staff in municipal services are competent and may in some areas even be able to provide unique expertise.

Urban energy, transport management, pollution control and waste management are examples of areas where Sweden has a lead position. Urban planning, land surveying and land registration are other traditional Swedish specialities. Swedeplan and Swedesurvey both have long experience from work in developing countries.

The industrial sector in this field is also well developed as well as the capacity for research, training and support to institution building. The Swedish local governments represent an important potential resource base that has not been utilized much in development co-operation.

Relevant experience and know-how from poverty alleviation is rare in Sweden. Social anthropologists have some knowledge but mostly from rural areas. Some experience will also be found in the NGOs sector.

The World Bank, UNDP, Habitat, UNICEF, and ILO are all involved in urban development programs and activities. There are several global and regional programs beside national projects. Together with other bilateral donors Sweden is at present co-financing the Urban Management Program (UNDP/Habitat/IBRD) and LIFE (UNDP). Almost all of them have suffered from recent budget reductions and are actively looking for additional funding. Co-financing of individual projects with IBRD, Habitat and UNICEF is therefore an option.

### *Regional guidelines for urban development assistance*

According to the Sida report urban development assistance should normally be concentrated to selected towns and cities and be designed to meet the requirements at the local level. As urban problems show certain regional variations some policy guidelines on a regional basis are discussed, bearing in mind that development programs must be based on careful analysis of each individual country and city.

## **2. ADEQUATE SHELTER AND SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT - PRIORITIES OF THE SWEDISH PREPARATORY GROUP**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Everyone should be entitled to an adequate standard of living, including adequate food, clothing and housing and to the continuous improvement of

living conditions. The personal, economic and cultural well-being of the individual must be fundamental objectives of public activity. In particular, it should be incumbent on the public sector to secure the right to work, housing and education and to promote social care and security and a good living environment. The public sector must endeavour to make the ideas of democracy guiding principles for all sectors of society. The public sector must assure men and women equal rights and safeguard the private life and family life of the individual.

The Habitat Agenda includes economic, social, environmental and cultural challenges of global dimension. Adequate shelter for all and sustainable urban development will be fundamental factors in international co-operation also during coming decades. Homelessness and inadequate shelter, lack of water and other fundamental resources, air pollution and excessive degradation of natural resources, insecurity in tenancy and general living conditions, rising unemployment and growing poverty, are parts of present urban development that challenge human dignity, peace and sustainability in many parts of the world and ultimately in the world at large.

It is the responsibility of national governments to establish advantageous conditions for the development of adequate shelter and of human settlements that are sustainable from the economic, social, cultural and environmental points of view. Through combined efforts from all parties concerned necessary changes can be identified and implemented.

As part of Sweden's foreign policy aiming at peace, security and democracy, Sweden should play an active role in international co-operation and assistance also in the Habitat sector, aiming at shaping sustainable homes in an urbanizing world. Efforts in the field of sustainable urban development should give priority to poverty alleviation, improvements of local urban environments as well as of the environment at large, the promotion of sustainable economic growth and of a democratic culture in urban governance.

The following observations have been highlighted in the Swedish preparatory process for the Habitat II Conference in Istanbul in June 1996.

## **2.2 The right to a home needs international recognition**

No human growth and development is possible without the individual having access to shelter, privacy and the reproductive functions of a home. This is particularly true for children and adolescents needing a secure base for education and for experiencing the hardships and the wonders of human life.

To secure adequate and sustainable living conditions for families and households, including individual children, adolescents, women and men, it is fundamental to protect homes and neighbourhoods. Recent international experiences of warfare aiming at the systematic destruction of human settlements, and of so called ethnical cleansing of unwanted population groups

illustrate the urgent need for international action. In particular the situation of children needs attention.

Demolition or radical renewal of extremely run-down or impoverished settlements are sometimes unavoidable last alternatives in the development of an urban area. Such last alternative measures as well as the normal raising of standards of living in urban slums and distressed areas, must however take place with due respect for the right to just compensation and the right to alternative and adequate shelter for people involved. The right to a home should be given international recognition through specific additions and amendments to existing international rules.

A proposal for International Standard Rules on Tenancy and Tenure Protection *The Right to One's Home*, was presented by the Swedish Minister of Housing and Energy to the Secretary General of the Habitat II Conference on August 28 1995 as a framework for more substantive obligations by Governments.

The main guardian of the right to one's home should be the national authorities, based on national laws recognizing the rights and obligations of tenants and home owners. Apart from protecting individuals from arbitrary evictions or demolition of human settlements, governments should move towards improving practices and transparency for land registration and cadastral systems. More enabling financial systems, emphasising equal access to credit, housing subsidies and incentives are crucial steps towards supporting disadvantaged and special target groups.

In many countries the security of individuals and families largely depends on the right to own one's home. According to the Beijing Platform of Action, men and women shall have full and equal access to economic resources, including the right to inheritance and ownership of land and property. While national laws often give equal rights of ownership to men and women, cultural practices and customary laws often discriminate against women. In many countries customary laws do not give women the right of ownership to property or enterprises, and the right of access to credits is often linked to property ownership as collateral. This leads to enforced dependency by women on men, and inhibits human creativity and development.

Existing credit markets are appropriate to large scale projects and large scale loans and do not serve people living in poverty, striving to raise their standard of living. Official cadaster is a prerequisite for secure ownership and for functioning credit markets. As a means for small scale human settlements development and for improving living conditions for women and children, Sweden will actively promote the equal right to own land and property, equitable access to functioning credit markets and the build-up of adequate official cadasters.

### **2.3 Increased focus on people living in poverty in urban areas**

Adequate shelter and adequate provision of potable water and sanitary living conditions are a necessity for decent living conditions and for human development. The needs of children, women, elderly people and people with disabilities need particular attention in all matters related to housing and planning.

Problems for young people are notorious in larger cities. Social distress and unemployment increase risks for drug abuse, violence and prostitution. Particularly young girls face serious risks. Street children bear witness of the social breakdown of poor communities in many large cities in the third world. When addressing issues of shelter, health, education and social security, the specific needs of children, particularly girl children, children with disabilities and migrant or refugee children require special considerations.

The UN Convention on Children gives strong support for taking the needs of young people into careful consideration in all human settlements matters. The child's right to live with the parents and in a family environment demands for a home. The right to protection of a child without family can not be true without a home. The child's right to develop physically, mentally, socially and morally to his or her full potential is totally dependant of a home and its surroundings. Planning for housing and urban development should observe the need of safety for the children, for instance by preventing traffic accidents and providing safe outdoor environments. Adolescents should be given increased opportunities to influence planning for sustainable urban development.

In many developing countries children and adolescents constitute 50 percent of the population. There are considerable risks for physical, mental and social illnesses among children and adolescents in disadvantaged urban areas of the third world. This is partly due to poor sanitary conditions, in particular caused by the lack of water. Malnutrition and infectious diseases contribute to the high child mortality rates but can also permanently damage children, with lifelong disabilities as a consequence. Facilities for maternity welfare, maternity care and child care as well as well functioning primary care units must be available within, or within easy access from, housing areas or integrated local urban environments. Child labour must be prevented. All children should have access to schools and adolescents to vocational training.

Longevity and declining fertility in many countries produces a dramatic ageing of the world's population. In the course of a few generations, the proportion of elderly people, those aged 60 and above, is expected to increase radically; according to some experts from approximately 1 in 14 to 1 in 4. Such a development will require specific measures to improve social security for the elderly, to integrate elderly in the development of local neighbourhoods and to generally promote the UN principles for elderly in practical programs and actions (independence, participation, care, self-fulfilment and dignity).

Measures to achieve equal opportunities for persons with disabilities should from the outset be integrated into development programmes. Women with disabilities have very limited opportunities to receive education, employment and health services. Also children with disabilities are often neglected. Organizations of persons with disabilities play a key role in advocacy, awareness raising and development concerning people with disabilities. It is necessary that such organizations are consulted when forming social strategies and social security systems. Clear references should be made in the final documents from Habitat II to the UN standard rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities.

Swedish development assistance should pay an increased attention to people living in poverty in urban areas. Options for action in support of the urban poor should form part of bilateral country analysis and country programs as well as of multilateral support programs.

Three parts of an enabling strategy should be observed, the first being practical self help measures supporting housing and necessary infrastructure for poor, often women-headed households, through integrated development programs in selected settlements offering opportunities for saving and credits, building materials, access to water and sanitation facilities etc.

The second part would aim at local and practical community work combating poverty, training street children and supporting old people and people with disabilities.

The third part of an enabling strategy geared at people living in poverty in urban areas is to ensure that public structural programs and investments forming part of urban management and planning, traffic and infrastructure, public health and education etc., do support instead of reduce the opportunities for poor people to improve their own situation. The systematic application of Social Impact Assessments in line with Environmental Impact Assessments provides a useful tool.

#### **2.4 Active participation by both women and men**

Many urban households living in poverty are headed by women. They often include three generations, with children and old people needing care and attention. Women heading poor households are often involved in survival activities such as petty trading and urban agriculture, which they have to combine with other duties, such as domestic chores and child rearing. Even if many women do have to carry an disproportional burden of home and neighbourhood upkeep, women are also the key to progress.

The active participation of women, particularly in planning, control and decision making in community-based projects, seems to be a most important aspect in order to bring about improvements of the living conditions in distressed urban areas. Any program that intends to address the needs of people

living in poverty has to incorporate women at an early stage, and ensure the continued commitment and involvement of both men and women in all phases of the program.

## **2.5 Appropriate technologies for human settlements**

Sustainable development must be based on the knowledge that every citizen gains from improved practices - the household perspective. The informal sector in some cases can lead the introduction of innovative techniques. Integrated development programmes for human settlements should explore techniques that minimize energy- and resource use and maximize human welfare through re-use, re-cycling and the use of environmentally friendly product alternatives. Demonstration projects with full local participation, should include participation of a wide spectrum of citizen groups to allow for a wide exchange and dissemination of ideas and experiences of sustainable technologies in the spirit of Agenda 21. Water conservation, sewage management, urban food production and composting, energy use in housing and other buildings, transport priorities etc., are key areas where appropriate technologies, both new and old, can be very successful. Development of such truly modern technology is a task for global co-operation, where Sweden should play an active role and where Swedish domestic experience could be useful.

## **2.6 Sharing of experience on sustainable urban development**

Sustainable human settlements development relates to the commitments at UNCED, including Chapter 28 on Local Agenda 21s by 1996. Habitat II should spell out specifically priority areas that must be undertaken in different sectors to achieve sustainable human settlements development in neighbourhoods of cities, towns, villages and dispersed settlements. Sweden has contributed through the study "The Sustainable City" prepared by the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences for Habitat II, based on the findings of a seminar series on the situation in four world cities and aiming at contributing to urban Local Agenda 21 activities; i. e. to the introduction of sustainable practices in urban design, planning and management. Seminar participants stressed the importance of international co-operation and coordination in defining and introducing best practices to prevent the continued depletion of the natural resource base for urban development and for adequate handling of the waste generated by city dwellers.

In order to be sustainable, urban development must be based on a human focus recognizing the need to strengthen, support and facilitate the productive and reproductive life in homes and settlements of individuals, either as such or as being members of families and households of various sizes and forms. Human focus implies a bottom up approach and the firm acceptance of a gender perspective and the recognition of the special needs of children and adolescents.

Growing cities of all sizes must find ways of managing urban development in forms that promote sustainable qualities in the urban environment and reduce

degradation of natural resources and excessive urban impact on the global environment. Cities that generally seem to have passed their peak of urbanisation, must take the lead towards sustainable urban development and prove through improved practices, that it is possible to reconsider established patterns of production and consumption in urban areas, without reducing human incentives for progress and better living conditions. New forms of co-operation and exchange of information between cities and governments in different parts of the world should be developed.

## **2.7 Public administration support and urban governance**

Broad, area-based, multi-purpose local governments provide adequate options to meet the demands for strong and efficient urban governance. Such governance is needed to promote sustainable urban development and allow decentralisation of public powers, close to individual people, businesses and local groups. Swedish municipalities have broad responsibilities ranging from social welfare support for individuals in crisis to such community issues as the planning, maintenance and protection of the physical environment, emergency services, civil defence, transportation and communications, technical services like water, sewage and energy, and recreational and cultural programs. Municipalities also have a strong freedom to establish own priorities when it comes to budget and other policy matters of importance to the local level.

Local governments in many parts of the world urgently need to ensure transparent, responsive, accountable, just, effective and efficient governance of towns, cities and metropolitan regions. Obviously such reform measures are core responsibilities of national governments. National governments should agree on measures to strengthen the capacity of local and regional governments to manage urban development in ways that promote sustainability through democratic and participatory procedures and the involvement of community based organisations and networks as well as the university and business worlds.

Housing and building, energy management and urban agriculture, water supply and infrastructure, traffic and land use, social work and health care, education and training, local employment and services, are important components of sustainable urban development that could be analyzed in integrated urban management programs and in community development programs, led by local governments and involving all actors concerned about the implementation of such programs.

Swedish development assistance can support the strengthening of local democracy in urban management through capacity building and institutional



development. Options for action should form part of bilateral country analysis and country programs as well as of multilateral support programs<sup>1</sup>.

## **2.8 Local Habitat commitments**

The roads to sustainable urban development world-wide will be found only if contents and methods from Agenda 21 are applied in cities and settlements everywhere. Governments should support the planning and implementation process recommended in Agenda 21 at municipal and city level to establish credible Local Agenda 21s by 1996. The Habitat II Conference provides a good opportunity for representatives of local governments, the business sector, NGOs, Universities and other interested partners to further their Agenda 21 commitments through Local Habitat Commitments to the year 2 000. Such commitments should include co-operation at local level in efforts towards sustainable urban development in cities, towns and settlements in their respective countries.

Sweden could support the exchange of experience and information with regard to long term challenges for urban management and planning, the provision of municipal services and the introduction of functioning and attractive urban eco-technology.

Some examples of such actions could include:

- The promotion of equity, to counteract social and ethnical segregation, and the creation of jobs, shelter and opportunities among people living in poverty,
- The promotion of land use patterns supporting economic growth and reducing the need for every day commuting by private car over vast distances,
- The adoption of environmentally sound, attractive and sustainable urban infrastructure technology and of environmentally friendly lifestyles,

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<sup>1</sup> The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), founded in Stockholm in February 1995 responds to the need to promote the growth of a democratic culture and the need to support electoral processes world-wide. The Institute will respond to countries and organisations that require advice and assistance on practical problems related to democracy and the holding of free and fair elections.

Making use of its world-wide networks of contacts and data, the Institute will help to develop country-specific solutions to problems and to draw lessons from relevant experience in other parts of the world. An additional task is to promote education on issues related to democracy and free elections.

- The sustainable provision of municipal services (water, sanitation, solid waste collection, energy use, transport, etc.), supporting social equity and community development on the terms of tenants and local actors,
- The promotion of a closer relationship and interaction between rural and urban areas,
- The protection of green areas and of historic landscapes and the promotion of urban environmental qualities in cities and city regions.
- The preservation of buildings and environments representing the cultural heritage, creating sustainable job opportunities and guaranteeing its accessibility now and for the future.

## **2.9 Swedish resources for development co-operation**

The Swedish resource base for international co-operation and development assistance in sectors covered by the Habitat II Conference is generally well developed. Industries, service companies, consultants, municipalities, national government, universities, NGOs and others have knowledge and experience relevant to sustainable urban development, the improvement of housing and shelter and the alleviation of poverty. Swedish experience could be of particular relevance when it comes to urban energy management, public transport, environmental control, management of the cultural heritage, waste and natural resource management, urban planning, land surveying and land registration, but also social work on the municipal and neighbourhood levels.

Research on urban issues, the transformation of living conditions in cities and urban areas, conditionalities for sustainable urban development and the relationships between urban and rural development needs strengthening. Macro as well as micro perspectives (social, human and natural sciences as well as engineering and architecture) must be applied in both fundamental and applied research in the Habitat domains. Sweden should contribute to capacity building in the human settlements sector through programmes for co-operation (twinning) between Swedish universities and institutions and counterparts in other countries.