

## UNDP Round Table on Global Change "The Next Millennium: Cities for People in a Globalizing World"

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The Round Table *"The Next Millennium: Cities for People in a Globalizing World"* will take place in Marmaris, Turkey, from 19 to 21 April 1996, with the generous support of the Government of Turkey. This Round Table will be fourth in the series of Round Tables on Global Changes.

The first Round Table, held in September 1990, considered whether the changes of the post-Cold War era would bring the requisite fresh impetus to global development challenges. Its findings were published in a five volume set *"Change: Threat or Opportunity?"* (United Nations, 1991).

The second Round Table, held in September 1992, examined the political, economic and social aspects of ongoing systemic changes together with their impact on the lives of people. Its outcome was the subject of the book *"A World Fit for People"* (New York University Press, 1993).

The third Round Table, held in July 1994, discussed the issues of poverty alleviation, productive employment and social integration which constituted the core themes of the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen in March 1995. The papers from the meeting were recently published in the book *"People: From Impoverishment to Empowerment"*. (New York University Press, New York, 1995.)

The aim of the *fourth Round Table* is to provide an intellectual framework to the last of the global United Nations conferences this decade - the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II). This 'City Summit', as referred to by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, will be held in Istanbul, Turkey, from 3 to 14 June 1996. It is also part of a comprehensive UNDP "Action Package" in support of the HABITAT II conference.

Habitat II will be the most recent of the global conferences that started in New York with the Children's Summit and stretched from Rio (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development) to Vienna (International Conference on Human Rights), to Cairo (International Conference on Population and Development), Copenhagen (World Summit on Social Development) and Beijing (Fourth World Conference on Women).

This unprecedented continuum of United Nations conferences spans some of the most serious and pressing challenges that will confront the world community in the 21st century. Together, they are shaping the economic and social agenda of the United Nations, providing us with a more holistic, more humane message about our global problems and about the cooperative solutions they require.

The world is becoming predominantly urban. In the 18th century only 3 percent of the population lived in cities. By contrast, at the turn of the century over 50 percent will be living in urban areas. Cities are reaching sizes unprecedented in human history. By the beginning of the 21st century, it is estimated that there will be 23 megacities, 18 of which will be in developing countries, with a population of 10 million or more. These cities will likely experience critical environmental degradation, which will push their inhabitants to the limits of their ability to sustain reasonable human life. All of them share certain fundamental problems: increasing demands on city budgets, polarization between rich and poor, and severe environmental strain



such as air pollution and water shortage. There is thus a compelling and urgent need to develop policies that will alter the situation and make cities more economically viable, politically participatory, ecologically sustainable and humanly and socially just.

Two critical challenges facing the world community in the 21st century are rapid urbanization and globalization. The fourth Round Table will, therefore, focus on the interlinkages between these two trends. The objective is to help identify practical and pragmatic policy options for achieving synergy - rather than conflict - between globalization and decentralization, local diversity and common concerns. Regionalization is, of course, a critical issue also to be considered in this connection.

Over one hundred leading international thinkers - policy makers, development practitioners, academics and business executives are being invited to participate in this Round Table in their personal capacities. Discussions will take place in plenary sessions as well as in separate working groups.

The fourth Round Table will examine such issues as: shifts in production structures and technologies and their impact on 'where and how people live'; employment; emerging challenges to urban management and development finance; strategies for ensuring a balance between economic growth, and human and environmental concerns within people's habitat; new forms of governance and partnership building; and cultural and social (dis-) integration. This Round Table will also aim to link global policies that have already been adopted and to ensure an integrated policy framework for the 21st century.

As in previous Round Tables, participants are encouraged to submit written contributions on one of the agenda items, annexed to the letter of invitation. These written contributions will serve as a stimulus for discussion on an informed and interactive basis. It is the intention of the organizers to publish a select number of these, in book form, at a later stage. Participants are invited to indicate, as soon as possible, whether they are considering to submit a written contribution and the preliminary topic of the paper.

Invitees will be the guests of UNDP during the duration of the conference. This will include the cost of room, board, and local transportation. Travel expenses to Turkey, however, will have to be met by the invitees, themselves or their sponsoring organizations. A detailed note on the arrangements will follow upon your acceptance.

Invitees are requested to reply as soon as possible and no later than the end of January. For further information and to notify the organizers of your intention to attend, please contact the Office of Development Studies at Fax: (212) 906-5657; Tel: (212) 906-5064 or DC1-2144 One United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017 Attn: Ms. Inge Kaul, Director, Office of Development Studies, UNDP, or Mr. Üner Kirdar, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Habitat II. We would appreciate it if invitees' replies would indicate correct address and contact information (including telephone and fax) for future correspondence.