



The Istanbul Declaration and The Habitat Agenda: with subject index Habitat Agenda: Paragraph 182 (Action)



To encourage and support participation, civic engagement and the fulfilment of governmental responsibilities, national Governments, local authorities and/or civil society organizations should put into effect, at appropriate levels, institutional and legal frameworks that facilitate and enable the broad-based participation of all people and their community organizations in decision-making and in the implementation and monitoring of human settlements strategies, policies and programmes; these institutional and legal frameworks would be specifically aimed at, *inter alia*:

- (a) Protecting the human right to hold and express opinions and to seek, receive and impart ideas and information without interference;
- (b) Facilitating the legal recognition of organized communities and their consolidation;
- (c) Permitting, facilitating and protecting the formation of independent non-governmental community, local, national and international organizations;
- (d) Providing full, timely and comprehensible information, without undue financial burden to the applicant;
- (e) Undertaking civic and human rights education and training programmes, using all forms of the media and education and information campaigns, to promote a civic spirit and an awareness of civil rights and responsibilities and the means of exercising them, of the changing roles of women and men and of issues relating to sustainable human settlements development and the quality of life;
- (f) Establishing regular and broad-based consultative mechanisms for involving civil society in decision-making in order to reflect the diverse needs of the community;
- (g) Removing legal barriers to participation in public life by socially marginalized groups and promoting non-discrimination legislation;
- (h) Establishing agenda-setting participatory mechanisms enabling individuals, families, communities, indigenous people and civil society to play a proactive role in identifying local needs and priorities and formulating new policies, plans and projects;
- (i) Fostering an understanding of contractual and other relationships with the private and non-governmental sectors to acquire the skills for negotiating effective partnerships for project implementation, development and management that will maximize benefits for all people;
- (j) Promoting equality and equity, incorporating gender considerations and the full and equal participation of women, and involving vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, including people living in poverty and other low-income groups, through institutional measures to ensure that their interests are represented in policy- and decision-making processes and through such techniques as advocacy training and seminars, including those that develop mediating and consensus-building skills that will facilitate effective networking and alliance formation;
- (k) Providing access to effective judicial and administrative channels for affected individuals and groups so that they can challenge or seek redress from decisions and actions that are socially and environmentally harmful or violate human rights, including legal mechanisms to ensure that all State bodies, both national and local, and other civil organizations remain accountable for their actions, in accordance with their social, environmental and human rights obligations;
- (l) Broadening the procedural right of individuals and civil society organizations to take legal action on behalf of affected communities or groups that do not have the resources or skills to take such action themselves;
- (m) Promoting the representation of intergenerational interests, including those of children and future generations in decision-making processes, while strengthening families;
- (n) Promoting the full potential of youth as key partners for the achievement of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements through various forms of education, quality training and skill-building, taking into account the diverse abilities, realities and experiences of youth;

- (o)** Facilitating access to decision-making and planning structures and legal services by people living in poverty and other low-income groups through the provision of such facilities as legal aid and free legal advice centres;
- (p)** Strengthening the capacity of local authorities and civil society to review social, economic and environmental policies affecting their communities and to set local priorities and contribute to the setting of local standards for services in such areas as basic education, child care, public health, public safety, drug-abuse awareness and environmental management;
- (q)** Promoting the use of new information technologies and the media, including the local media, to facilitate dialogue, to exchange relevant information, experiences and practices concerning human settlements and to form constructive partnerships among civil society and decision makers.

