

The Vancouver Action Plan

64 Recommendations for National Action

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Recommendations from the [Vancouver Plan of Action](#), June 1976

D. Land

(Agenda item 10 (d))

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Preamble

1. Land, because of its unique nature and the crucial role it plays in human settlements, cannot be treated as an ordinary asset, controlled by individuals and subject to the pressures and inefficiencies of the market. Private land ownership is also a principal instrument of accumulation and concentration of wealth and therefore contributes to social injustice; if unchecked, it may become a major obstacle in the planning and implementation of development schemes. Social justice, urban renewal and development, the provision of decent dwellings-and healthy conditions for the people can only be achieved if land is used in the interests of society as a whole.

2. Instead, the pattern of land use should be determined by the long-term interests of the community, especially since decisions on location of activities and therefore of specific land uses have a long-lasting effect on the pattern and structure of human settlements. Land is also a primary element of the natural and man-made environment and a crucial link in an often delicate balance. Public control of land use is therefore indispensable to its protection as an asset and the achievement of the long-term objectives of human settlement policies and strategies.

3. To exercise such control effectively, public authorities require detailed knowledge of the current patterns of use and tenure of land; appropriate

legislation defining the boundaries of individual rights and public interest; and suitable instruments for assessing the value of land and transferring to the community, inter alia through taxation, the unearned increment resulting from changes in use, or public investment or decisions, or due to the general growth of the community.

4. Above all, Governments must have the political will to evolve and implement innovative and adequate urban and rural land policies, as a corner-stone of their efforts to improve the quality of life in human settlements.

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