

S. Cantacuzino, rapporteur

Conscious of the diversity that exists in the Islamic world, we tried to identify the common factors in the spaces which have traditionally served the recreational needs of people in that world. In doing this we noted that, in accordance with the *Shari'a*, state lands designated for public use and utilities may never be alienated. It would seem most important to emphasize this law in order to preserve the spaces which are existing or earmarked for this purpose. We noted the multipurpose nature of these spaces, and considered this a valid principle in a world of change and scarce resources.

Spaces for public use form a sequence which starts in the private courtyard, continues in the semi-public streets and squares between the houses and ends in the public *maidan* and garden. In new development it is the need for private space—the courtyard and terrace—that must be emphasized, because no amount of public or semi-public space can provide a substitute for inadequate private space. In a poor country with a hot climate the courtyard is a unique resource, one which also provides the necessary privacy for the women and children of a segregated society. It is obvious that new multistory developments can neither avail themselves of this resource nor provide the same standards of privacy.

The streets and squares, the semi-public spaces between buildings, have traditionally provided areas for encounter and play. We felt that such areas should be deliberately and carefully planned as social and recreational places, not regarded as mere access routes or traffic arteries. At the city scale we considered both the *maidan* and the public garden as valid models for the future: the *maidan* as an open space for prayers, games, large public meetings, fairs and other festivities, the garden as a haven and an analogue for paradise. Of particular importance is the provision of planted spaces for use as holiday picnic areas by the lower income group.

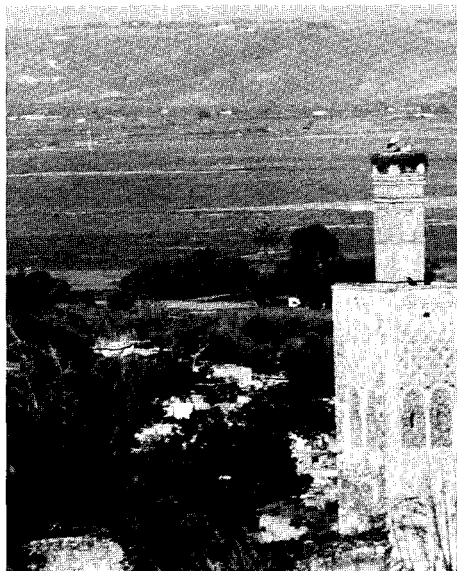
Another type of facility with both a social and recreational purpose is the community centre which serves a neighbourhood. It is of the utmost importance that such

centres be multipurpose and flexible in use, providing a variety of services such as social and medical welfare, meeting and recreation rooms, a library, a nursery and a canteen. In this context we would also recommend that school buildings and playing fields be made available after school hours for use by the local community.

We recommend that the infrastructure for domestic tourism be developed, as it is in fact a prerequisite for international tourism. Insufficient emphasis has been given to date to places of religious and cultural importance, such as the *mazar*. In most Muslim countries the *mazars* are a major attraction, for people from inside the region and often from outside as well. Transportation capabilities may be the major constraint on the volume of tourism.

Sometimes modest accommodation is available in the form of *serais*. We believe that more facilities on the lines of existing hotels have to provide for two kinds of tourists—business and pleasure. Typically, both these groups have been accommodated in the high cost, high-rise, energy-consuming buildings.

We realize that as long as building codes remain unchanged it will not be possible to prevent high-rise structures in central urban locations. Therefore we strongly urge that these codes be reexamined. Because of the disruptive effect of high-rise buildings on the environment, it is important to put a reasonable ceiling on height and floor area ratios. This will permit the provision of business tourist accommodations in the form of smaller hotels, which will reduce reliance on high technology and permit the use of local techniques. We realize the importance of location and services for business tourists; these could be provided in low-rise buildings without necessarily affecting efficiency. Although there may be provision for artificially controlled heating and cooling in extreme weather conditions, buildings should be designed to take advantage of natural ventilation for as much of the year as possible. For pleasure tourism the general principles remain the same, although a broader range of accommodation is clearly desirable.



Rabat, Morocco: the Chella Gardens

Photo: H-U Khan/Aga Khan Awards