

# THE RIO DE JANEIRO MEETINGS

21-26 march 2010

During the last week of March in Rio de Janeiro was held the 5<sup>th</sup> World Urban Forum, WUF5, organised by United Nations. This event has concentrated a large number of participants. Many other parallel events happened simultaneously during the same week. The Habitat Professionals Forum, HPF, is one of them. I have participated as ECTP delegate in its annual meeting.

I will refer briefly the major events that took place in Rio during the World's Urban Forum week.

## 1. **THE 5<sup>TH</sup> WORLD URBAN FORUM, WUF5**, [www.unhabitat.org/wuf](http://www.unhabitat.org/wuf)

The world urban forums, organised since the beginning of the century by UN-HABITAT, are the largest world think tanks about cities and urban problems. Previous WUFs have been hold in Nairobi 2002, Barcelona 2004, Vancouver 2006 and Nanjing 2008. Bahrain in 2012 will be the next.

Among politicians, community leaders, researchers, professionals, activists of gender, youth, and others movements, executives, journalists, etc., 20.000 delegates have participated. During five intense days have presented and discussed their ideas about The WUF's theme: "THE RIGHT TO THE CITY-BRIDGING THE URBAN DIVIDE" in more than five hundred events,(plenary sessions, discussion groups, round tables, training events, thematic debates, presentations, side events, dialogues, assemblies, caucus meetings,..)

It is impossible to synthesize such a huge intellectual production. In this summary, I will just highlight three key ideas of the WUF that were often set out:

### A. **The fight against poverty.**

1 billion people live today in slums and shantytowns. According to the actual trend, this figure will double in 20 years.

Slums improvement has been set in four main axes:

- Upgrading existing slums. Evictions and relocations should be avoided.
- Preventive policies against slums. Town Planning; Preparing urbanised land to absorb migrations; Soft micro-credits,
- Multisectoral interventions: Social inclusion, employment, education, health, gender,..
- Partnership: Central and local administrations, NGO, professionals, private enterprises, and fundamentally the affected communities.

### B. **Recognizing the urban poor as active agents of development.**

This is a new emergent standpoint. Assumption of the ineffectiveness of top-down

policies on affected passive population. It is necessary to work in partnership WITH the users, not FOR the users.

Grassroots organisations leadership produces: More effective and affordable results; Strengthening of the social cohesion of the community and therefore social stability

### C. **Sustainability,**

In the conventional way of protecting and preserving the planet for the future generations, but also in a broader interpretation of economic and social sustainability.

Related to this topic the prevention, mitigation and resilience in face of the climate change effects.

THE WORLD URBAN CAMPAIGN, WUC [www.unhabitat.org/wuc](http://www.unhabitat.org/wuc)

The World Urban Campaign, WUC, has been the central event of the WUF5. The campaign focuses on SUSTAINABLE URBANISATION. (attachment 1)

*Sustainable urbanisation, understood as a process, which promotes the "Right to the City" through an integrated pro-poor approach to the social, economic and environmental pillars of sustainability.*

The campaign is not a vertically driven hierarchy. It is a horizontal network driven by collaboration, commitment and partnership involving public, private and social stakeholders.

UN-Habitat will coordinate the world campaign.

#### The 100 cities Initiative

"The 100 cities Initiative" is one of the early actions of the WUC. It aims to chair innovative urban practices by encouraging and mobilizing people, communities, municipal officials, service providers and political leaders of any city to tell their story about how are contributing to a better and more sustainable city.

There is an UN-Habitat selection committee for the 100 cities initiative. So far, there are already 25 cities selected. New candidate cities are looked-for.

## 2. **THE SOCIAL URBAN FORUM, SUF** <http://opensm.net/projects/fsu-usf/project-home>

Not far from the place where the WUF was hold, the Social Urban Forum celebrated in parallel its meeting. The SUF has a unambiguous antysystem approach, aligned against the neoliberal economic structure and very critical with the United Nations' inoperability. The SUF is related with the alternative World Social Forum that had its first meeting in Porto Alegre in 2001 with a slogan that became very popular "A better world is possible"

The SUF has been visited by many people, less than the WUF, but in general by the same public.

Prominent speakers have intervened, such as the well-known American geographer

David Harvey or the architect Raquel Rolnik, former planning Secretary of State of the Brazilian government.

Based on similar analysis of the urban reality, SUF proposals differ from the reformist U.N. approach, considering options much more radical.

### 3. **HABITAT PROFESSIONALS FORUM, HPF**, [www.habitatforum.org/](http://www.habitatforum.org/)

HPF meeting hold in Rio, on Sunday 21st march 2010, a day before the starting of the WUF, the 22<sup>nd</sup> march.

#### The professionals Charter

The HABITAT PROFESSIONALS FORUM CHARTER, (attachment 2), has been approved. The HPF Charter is regarded as the framework, that should structure the “sustainable” and “equitable” practice of the 6 million of professionals related to the human settlements.

The charter has been approved initially. Before the definitive approval, the document must be discussed by the member associations, whose comments will be merged in the final document. All the accredited HPF members will sign the final HPF Charter.

Deadline for receiving HPF comments is the 15<sup>th</sup> October 2010.

I would suggest to disseminate the charter among ECTP members and to set the 15<sup>th</sup> September as deadline for comments and suggestions. We should consolidate the comments before sending them to HPF

### **HPF governance**

#### Transfer of the chairmanship and secretariat to UIA.

Derek Martin, (IFHP), the current Chair, transferred the Secretariat from IFHP to UIA and the Chairmanship to Louise Cox (UIA), for the next two years.

The new Secretariat will be at UIA Headquarters in Paris and the contact details are International Union of Architects (UIA)

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#### Web Site

The HPF web site would from now on be within the UN-HABITAT web site under Partners/Professionals as [www.unhabitat.org/partners/professionals](http://www.unhabitat.org/partners/professionals)

#### ECTP-CEU admission in HPF

The ECTP-CEU participation in the former HPF meetings has been as observer. Last February has applied for the admission.

ECTP-CEU fits fully in the HPF eligibility criteria:

*“Members will be independent, non-profit and non-governmental organisations that are*

*international or regional organisations of Human Settlement Professionals supporting sustainable urban development".*

ECTP-CEU has been accepted as HPF full accredited member.

### **HPF link to the U.N. World Urban Campaign**

In relation to the WUC it has been agreed:

-Commitment to disseminate the campaign. Particularly in the WUF roundtable organised by HPF.

- The current Chair, Louise Cox, will be the HPF representative on the Executive Committee of the World Urban Campaign, (WUC)

- HPF members are invited to participate in the WUC steering committees: (Communications, Policies and Tools and Sustainable Cities Advisory Committee to manage the 100 cities)

- It was agreed that HPF would focus on promoting and working for the World Urban Campaign on the four principles of the HPF Charter.

- i. Social, economic and environmental harmony.
- ii. Pro-poor and inclusivity
- iii. Heritage, culture and sense of place
- iv. The impacts of climate change and disasters

To address these items four tasks teams were set out. I am as ECTP-CEU registered in the second one, Pro-poor and inclusivity. ECTP-CEU delegates that might be interested in working in this topic, please contact me.

### **4. PROJECT OF AN IBERO-AMERICAN PLANNING FEDERATION, FIU**

The Spanish planning association, AETU, together with the Portuguese planning association, AUP have organised during the last 25 years 13 biennial Ibero-American Planning Congress, (Seville 1984, Tlaxcala 1986, Barcelona 1988, Santiago de Cuba 1990, Valencia 1992, Montevideo 1994, Pamplona 1996, Porto 1998, Recife 2000, Zaragoza 2002, San Juan de Puerto Rico 2004, Salamanca 2006 and Monterrey 2008). The next one, the 14<sup>th</sup>, will be held, next October in Tenerife, Canarias Islands, (Spain).

From this vast asset, AETU and AUP have decided to promote a planning federation with all the Latin-American countries. Taking advantage of the large number of South and Centre America planners that intended to participate at the WUF event in Rio, we have organised during the same days several working meetings focused on the FIU.

Result of these meetings has been set up a memorandum signed by 28 participants representing 15 countries. Five other Latin-American countries that did not assist Rio are joining the signatures. The memorandum frames the rules of the future federation, FIU, which aims to be constituted next October coinciding with the 14<sup>th</sup> Ibero-American Planning Congress in Tenerife.