



Announcement from Madrid

Building together the world conference of inhabitants!

Considering:

The drastic situation in the world's cities:

- The reigning neoliberal globalization, based on exclusion and social inequality, is the reason for more and more infringements on the right to housing, leaving more than a billion people homeless, or living in disastrous conditions, threatened with eviction, discriminated against by war and victimized by catastrophe, because they are immigrants, women, poor, or marginalized ethnicities such as the Dalits, the Roms, and the native peoples;
- The UN-habitat predicts that by 2020, the number of people living under these conditions will have increased by 70%, or more than 1,7 billion worldwide, while urban politics continue to favour the interests of estate agencies rather than the interests of the majority, and the governments of poor countries go on paying external debt as demanded by the World Bank and the IMF. Therefore, the target of Goal #7 of the Millennium Development Goals established by the United Nations, which hoped to improve living conditions for 100 million people by 2020, will have proved impossible and frivolous.

That social maturity is now a reality and that the time has come to make heard the voice, the experience and the policy of the new inhabitants, organized worldwide:

- Every day, new initiatives arise across the globe, born of the social organizations and the networks of inhabitants who are heroically resisting eviction, fighting privatization and the liberalization of the housing sector, living in vacant buildings and empty lots, and defending together the right to housing; In the midst of these daily battles, various cooperative alternatives are coming from the communities, the neighbourhoods, the colonies, and the favelas, which foreshadow not one, but many models destined to become public policies, both urban and rural, and realistic alternatives for lasting human development;
- These popular and social experiments are proof of the extraordinary capability and maturity of the social urban movements, which are the modern political equivalent of the old "city builders", jointly taking part in resolving the various urban and rural dilemmas creatively and effectively; These movements are diverse in origin, culture, and geography, but share the principle of solidarity, marked by their strong social attachment and the common desire to build another possible world, affirming that other cities are possible.

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We request and support the convocation of a World Conference of Inhabitants for 2011.

We recognize its basis in the Charter of Principles of the WSF and the Charter of San Salvador, in the World Conference of Inhabitants (Mexico, October 2000) and in the World Conference of Citizens for an interdependent and responsible world (Lille, October 2001), among others; we base this proposal on the call to unite the urban social movements, approved by more than 350 organizations in over 40 countries on all continents.

We appeal to all organizations and networks of inhabitants, all cooperatives, householder's associations, community centres, native peoples and committees for the right to housing in all countries, to organize together this initiative on all levels (local, regional, national, and global) with the following goals in mind:

- To build an international common space for joint discussion of experiences, and to debate, evaluate, systemize and elaborate new proposals: a space based on the recognition of diversity in culture and type, but also of complementarity and equilibrium in respects to our right to independent organization as an international urban movement, building the Urban Way (Via Urbana) before the various actors (local authorities, governments, transnational powers, professionals, NGOs); to promote initiatives for joint action, for the defense of our legal right to housing, to cities, and to homes.

Coordinating our efforts against neoliberal globalization will make it possible for us to build another world and other cities!

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Towards the World Conference of Inhabitants

- Appeal to proposal to be signed on the local, federal, and international levels (Aug.-Sept. 2008)
- Social European Forum (Malmö, Sweden, Sept. 15th-21st 2008): establish the promotional unitary committee and the World Days for No Evictions regional agenda (Oct. 2008): establish the promotional unitary committees and the Social Forum of the Americas territorial agendas (Guatemala, Oct. 7-12 2008): establish the promotional unitary committee and the regional agenda
- African Social Forum (Abuja, Nigeria, Nov. 2008): establish the promotional unitary committee and the regional agenda
- Global Social Forum (Belem, Brazil, Jan. 25-30 2009): fine-tune the terms of reference and establish the promotional unitary committee and the China-Europa Forum global agenda (China, 2009): establish the promotional unitary committee and the regional agenda
- Regional Social Forums and other initiatives: finish preparing the grounds
- World Conference of Inhabitants (January 2011, to be determined)

We suggest that all use the site www.habitants.org and other computer resources to communicate systematically, widely and efficiently at each step.

Madrid, June 2nd 2008

International Alliance of Inhabitants (IAH) delegates of popular organizations of different continents meeting at Madrid for the Coordination Committee of the IAH.