

October 4, 2004

World Day of Zero Evictions, for Dignified Housing For All

The inhabitants of Europe, Africa, Latin America, Asia, and North America have met together today, the 16th of September of 2004, in the historic city of Barcelona, to give our critique of the World Urban Forum, which has not allowed the voice of the true constructors of the city to be heard. We salute the vigor and initiative demonstrated by inhabitants from all over the world in their struggle against neo-liberalism – an economic approach of which an essential part is the exclusion of the world's poorest people from access to land and shelter.

The cultural diversity of the inhabitants and their struggles shows an alternative way to construct cities with rights for all, and to actively confront segregationist policies. It is fitting to highlight the "W Nairobi W!" campaign, which has managed to stop the eviction of 300,000 inhabitants of slums, and which today is fighting for the cancellation of Kenya foreign debt, so that financial resources can be used for policies of social investment, instead.

Likewise notable are the cases of France, The Dominican Republic, Brazil, EUA (New York), Peru, Ecuador, Italy, Senegal, and many others. In all these places, the inhabitants have suffered the threat of eviction, and are aware that this forms a part of the conception of the city, based on land speculation and social exclusion. The society that we desire is based on cities that are democratic, sustainable, just and supportive.

For this reason, the International Inhabitants' Alliance (IAI) has launched the INTERNATIONAL ZERO EVICTIONS CAMPAIGN, which seeks to mobilize social organizations and popular inhabitants' movements from all countries to work to have their territories declared free of evictions. It is imperative that we begin a new stage in the struggle to stop evictions, which are becoming more and more massive and violent. The campaign also proposes alternative financing policies – canceling external debt, and orienting financial resources towards finding solutions for the right to development, to housing, and to the city.

In view of the above, we declare:

1. The need to work together collectively with other networks and movements to construct an international ALERT SYSTEM against evictions, and for the swapt of debt with appropriate housing policies.
2. Our decision to mobilize in all countries on the 4th of October, to celebrate the "World Day of Zero Evictions, for Dignified Housing For All"
3. That we will participate in the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, 2005, on a grand scale, through many different initiatives, principally the "March of Those Without" (roofs, land, jobs, education, health, paper, etc.), promoted by the network of NOVOX, FCOC, IAI, and other associations. We will build an International Platform of Urban Social Movements, making the urban questions a key focus of the agenda.
4. That we ask local powers to join us in solidarity in a concrete and effective way in these initiatives, declaring their localities to be "Eviction-Free Zones", and acting accordingly.

5. We call for the United Nations to comply consistently with Millennium Development Goals related to housing, considering that the figures originally established have largely been surpassed by reality. For this reason, it is necessary that the UN programs and projects be updated to match people's concrete needs. One way to achieve this would be by actively participating in the Zero Evictions campaign, and by giving real support to the Advisory Group on Forced Evictions.

International Alliance of Inhabitants

www.habitants.org/IAI

Barcelona, 16/9/04