

Inhabitants' Memory

Discussion paper on Inhabitants' Network actions

*"To live well on our planet"**



The inhabitants at the opening march, WSF (Dakar, February 6th 2011)

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* Campaigning and using solidarity to build the Urban and Community Way to live well on our planet!

http://www.habitants.org/the_urban_way/2012_campaigning_and_building_in_solidarity_the_urban_and_communitarian_way_to_live_well_on_our_planet

1. Introduction: inhabitants have decided to take a decisive step forwards

Background

Faced with the structural crisis resulting from the implementation of urban policies led by transnational capital, adding to the weight of the challenge, inhabitants' organizations and urban social movements have decided to take a decisive step forwards in order to go beyond declarations and to define strategies and collective actions that entail having a programme and a form of organization and reinforcing alliances to bring about systemic and revolutionary changes that guarantee success based on the exercise of responsible conduct.

The World Assembly of Inhabitants: evolution of a ten-year process

Consequently, sharing the principles enshrined in the Charter of the WSF¹, the Charter of San Salvador², by the World Assembly of Inhabitants (Mexico, October 2000)³ and by the World Assembly of Citizens for solidarity and a responsible world (Lille, October 2001)⁴, after the remarkable success of the Call for the Creation of a Common Global Space of Solidarity for Urban Social Movements⁵ and of the Declaration of Madrid (2008)⁶, signed by over 600 signatories from 42 countries, they decided to launch the World Assembly of Inhabitants concept, to be organized during the WSF 2011 in Dakar⁷.

The idea, developed through a basic process favoured by the International Alliance of Inhabitants, aimed to reinforce the status of inhabitants in the fight for the right to housing and to the city, without frontiers, because the global crisis that affects inhabitants in poor neighbourhoods down to their very bricks or bones is without frontiers.

The IAI supports the emergence of a new kind of inhabitant, well anchored in the local social fabric and very aware of the global challenge, capable of

¹ World Social Forum Charter of Principles
<http://www.fsm2013.org/en/node/204>

² Charter of San Salvador
http://www.alliance21.org/2003/article.php3?id_article=449

³ Resolutions of World Assembly of Inhabitants Mexico (October 2000)
<http://www.hic-al.org/anterior/results.html>

⁴ World Citizens Assembly (October 2001)
<http://www.alliance21.org/lille/en/index.html>

⁵ Creating A Common Global Space Of Solidarity For Urban Social Movements
http://www.habitants.org/the_urban_way/creating_a_common_global_space_of_solidarity_for_urban_social_movements

⁶ Building together the World Assembly of Inhabitants!
http://www.habitants.org/the_urban_way/building_together_the_world_assembly_of_inhabitants

⁷ World Assembly of Inhabitants
http://www.habitants.org/the_urban_way/world_assembly_of_inhabitants

getting involved in the fight to defend the collective rights and responsibilities to be the co-builders and co-governors of the cities and not simply users-customers of the territories.

In order to do this, given the failure of the neo-liberal model that produces over a billion homeless or badly housed people, to which must be added the suffering of around 70 million people who each year are threatened with eviction or evicted, an Alternative Urban Social Pact is required, to be based, this time around, on human and environmental rights. In other words, to ensure that “another world is possible”.

2. Background: united and plural, from the Declarations to the Call

The WAI process has been fuelled by different dynamics and in particular by the debate on the Right to the City and the mobilisation of the ‘voiceless’, who have emerged through the Urban Convergences at the Belem WSF⁸, supported by all the relevant international networks involved in these issues (including HIC, Swedish Cooperative Centre for Latin America, COHRE, LOCOA, Dignity International, SELVIP, PPEHRC, Habitat for Humanity – Latin America, ENDA Third World, FNRU and No-Vox), the Forum of Local Authorities and certain universities.

The initiative was formulated by the Declaration approved at the Urban Social Forum (Rio de Janeiro, 2010)⁹ where the WAI Steering Committee was established, starting the process of creating regional and local Steering Committees, particularly at the Social Forum events (the United States SF in Detroit, the ESF in Istanbul and the ASF in Asunción) and other events on all continents and in many countries including Bangalore for Asia, Bangladesh, Senegal and Cameroon.

The Steering Committees are mainly responsible for the contents and format of the WAI and also for managing the calendar running up to Dakar and beyond. This responsibility includes the possibility of creating partnerships in order to encourage greater participation and dealing with the consequent follow-up.

The WAI Steering Committees held a meeting at the International Days for the Right to Housing event in Bobigny¹⁰, France, October 2010, and were composed of representatives from the different networks (IAI, HIC, LOCOA, No-Vox) that ratified the WAI’s convocation in Dakar, Senegal, during the WSF 2011, and assumed the responsibility of defining the tasks and

⁸ Urban Movements Building Convergences at the World Social Forum, WSF 2009
http://www.habitants.org/the_urban_way/world_social_forum_belem_january_2009/urban_movements_building_convergences_at_the_world_social_forum_wsf_2009

⁹ Call from Rio towards the World Assembly of Inhabitants (WSF Dakar 2011)
http://www.habitants.org/the_urban_way/rio_2010/call_from_rio_towards_the_world_assembly_of_inhabitants_wsf_dakar_2011

¹⁰ International Days for the Right to Housing Without Borders
http://www.habitants.org/zero_evictions_campaign/world_zero_evictions_days_2010/news/international_days_for_the_right_to_housing_without_borders_bobigny_france_13-16_october_2010

commitments aiming to promote the WAI. Agreements were made on the central ideas of the debate, on its characterisation and objectives, format, dissemination and promotion, resources and partnerships.

3. Development of the WAI , self-managed and under the WSF

The Assembly¹¹ took place with a certain number of initiatives, some of which were self-managed by the various networks and inhabitants' organizations, some were in collaboration (workshops and themed meetings) with various networks that offered to bring their themes to the WAI process, and some involved everyone (opening march and Assembly of the whole):

a) Operational meeting of the WAI Steering Committee in order to take stock of the current state of affairs, hear all suggestions and to organise the WAI agenda in co-ordination with the relevant networks (5th February).

b) The implementation of exchanges and solidarity-based initiatives in the popular neighbourhoods of Dakar.

c) Participation in initiatives under the WSF:

- the caravan organised by No-Vox, CADTM and the IAI participation that arrived in Dakar from various African countries
- the 'inhabitants block' in the opening march (6th February)
- different initiatives (15 workshops, discussions, cultural initiatives, meetings) on the Day of Africa and the Diaspora (7th February) and in the form of self-organised activities in the popular neighbourhoods and UCAD (8th and 9th February).

d) The WAI plenary session held in the 'Village des Habitants' tent at UCAD (10th February).

¹¹ World Assembly of Inhabitants
http://www.habitants.org/the_urban_way/world_assembly_of_inhabitants



*Approval of the Dakar Declaration at the Village des Habitants
(Dakar, February 10th 2011)*

Strategies, themes and methodology, by and for inhabitants

The debate on urban issues and housing focused on the following:

- The city which we are opposed to (analysis of the urban and global crisis)
- The city that we are building (exchanges of alternative and activist initiatives in support of the right to habitat)
- The city that we are fighting for (creation of a g-local platform of action to build an alternative Urban Social Pact).

The following themes in particular were developed:

➤ **Popular Fund For Land And Housing¹²**

This is a new tool based on participatory policies that is financed by the cancellation of the external debt in order to recovery territorial sovereignty and equitable relations between states as well as between states and citizens, developing the public housing service through, in particular, by the housing co-operatives as communities. The workshop defined the terms of reference of the programme proposal and of a mobilisation strategy that would give social movements influence on the public policies of their countries. The projected campaign will be tested in certain African and Latin American countries, and also proposed in those northern countries impoverished by the global crisis.

¹² Popular Fund for Land and Housing
http://www.habitants.org/la_voie_urbaine/alajar_mil_millones_de_personas

➤ **Housing co-operatives as a way of addressing the social housing crisis**

The workshop emphasised the various methods employed by the co-operatives of different countries that, by considering the housing as value of use, want to create social housing policies that are market alternatives. The participants agreed to develop, in particular, co-operatives that aim to build communities (community property, mutual aid, self-building, self-help renovations, Community Land Trust, etc.). Of particular interest is the proposal of a partnership between the multi-ethnic Coralli Co-operative (Italy) and a co-operative in Dakar.

➤ **Popular strategies for tackling evictions¹³**

The workshops and the mobilisation that took place in front of the Ghanaian Embassy emphasised the importance of exchanging experiences in order to develop international solidarity, common strategies, alliances and partnerships with all the participants involved in the creation of an Alternative Urban Social Pact based on human rights. The agreement on the co-ordination of the World Days of October 2011¹⁴-2012, while concentrating on the fight against evictions in particular (evictions caused by mega-projects, large-scale events, economic reasons, racism, war, natural disasters, climate change, etc.), is a measure to initiate the creation of common tools (a warning system, mobilisations, agreements with local authorities to issue anti-eviction orders, etc.).



*Demonstration against evictions in front of the Ghanaian Embassy
(Dakar, February 8th 2011)*

¹³ Zero Evictions Campaign
http://www.habitants.org/zero_evictions_campaign

¹⁴ World Zero Evictions Days – for the Right to Habitat 2011
http://www.habitants.org/zero_evictions_campaign/world_habitat_days_2011

➤ **Urban Reform in economic development, the right to housing, water, sanitation and energy**

These closely linked issues help to define the Right to Habitat. Exchanges between the different networks (Right to Energy, CONAM, IAI, ENDA) reinforced the realisation that it is necessary to work together in order to ensure that development combines environmental sustainability with social and economic sustainability and climate justice. This has been taken into account in the preparations of initiatives for Rio+20 (June 2012).¹⁵

➤ **Linking together the Right to the City and the Right to Land**

The workshops and exchanges between inhabitants' organizations and rural organizations emphasised the strategic importance of developing dialogue and an alliance between the two social sectors that are on increasingly contiguous territories, both heavily affected by the privatisation of the commons. The global scale of urbanisation shows an increasingly clear connection between agricultural production and urban agriculture and, in particular, thus shows the necessity of combined action against land grabbing by the few and against the eviction of entire communities. It is mainly about starting to push for an international call to action for the recovery of territorial sovereignty and against land grabbing.

➤ **Development and Disability: equal opportunities in the cities**

The IAI also managed to establish convergences with networks that have not been part of the inhabitants' battles on a global scale up to now. An important convergence of this kind was with Handicap International, which proposed co-organising the inclusion of its workshop as a themed contribution to the WAI and to the right to the city in particular, considering disability as a base point of reference for policies concerning universal access to urban spaces, buildings and housing. There is consensus on elaboration of this cross-cutting theme not only on the platforms at a territorial level but also in the preparation of the International Conference on the Accessibility of Cities (Paris, December 2012).

➤ **Building the inhabitants' memory¹⁶**

The visualisation of the process that started at the World Assembly of Inhabitants (Mexico, 2000), has gathered results over time, and was an exercise of convergence that captured the identification of the participant in relation to the reading of events thanks to their conceptualisation and to knowledge without deception, secrecy or deduction.

¹⁵ Inhabitants at the People's Summit, Rio+20
http://www.habitants.org/the_urban_way/inhabitants_at_the_people_s_summit_rio_20

¹⁶ Inhabitants' Memory, Sharing Knowledge En Route Towards the World Assembly of Inhabitants
http://www.habitants.org/urban_popular_university/inhabitants_memory

This programme, implemented by the Urban Popular University (UPU)¹⁷, put together over 50 video interviews with urban social leaders from all continents throughout the last year of the WAI process, implementing the methodology of knowledge co-production as part of collective creation by organizations from different countries, cultures, languages.

The methodology was based on collecting video interviews that express inhabitants' experiences, claims and struggles and constitute a memory archive that can be used to reflect on and analyze strategies and tactics to claim the right to housing.

This memory was the basis of the workshop organized in the working-class Guédiawaye district.

4. Some central ideas that emerged from the WAI process for an agenda that brings hope

- The WAI functions in a radically different political context to that of the year 2000: 2011 was characterised by the global crisis of neoliberalism and the crisis of civilisation; the USA's loss of imperial hegemony and the emergence of China; the arrival of the Left in the governments of many Latin American countries; the upheavals in the Arab world with the defeats of the Tunisian and Egyptian dictatorships; the rise of social disquiet in Algeria, Iran, Libya, Yemen, Syria and Bahrain. As a result, the WAI was filled with a feeling that revolutionary changes are a possibility in the 21st century.
- The various socio-political contexts in different countries show the breaches of the right to habitat and the different obstacles that are ultimately born of the neoliberal system violating territorial sovereignty. The various struggles of inhabitants' organizations, however, show the possibility of finding appropriate and sustainable solutions to the urban, global and housing crises to recover territorial sovereignty and equity.
- The right of inhabitants to be considered holders of territorial sovereignty, having rights and being responsible for the future as co-builders and co-governors of sustainable human settlements, locally as well as globally, and not just users-customers of the territories.
- The WAI, run by inhabitants' movements and not by NGOs, support groups or professionals, is a space where the actors wage their struggles from their neighbourhoods with their programmes and priorities, and is thus a political investment that brings hope.

¹⁷ Urban Popular University
http://www.habitants.org/urban_popular_university

- The development of the process initiated by the WAI connects the global, regional, national and local arenas in order to create the Urban and Community Way¹⁸, a global federation of inhabitants' organizations and urban social movements. It is about being a common space and not a bureaucratic superstructure where the networks of inhabitants, all while keeping their independence, share experiences, elaborate strategies and platforms, reinforce solidarity through g-local battles and use common tools.
- The agenda of this process is independent and based on the answer to calls to solidarity at an opportune and appropriate moment, as well as on the amount of time inhabitants' organizations and their networks need to mature on a global and local level.
- The creation of the global federation requires the creation of a collective intelligence: the systemisation of the WAI process gathering the memories of the social movements by 'co-producing' knowledge constitutes a fundamental foundation. This instrument of knowledge attempts to dissolve the hierarchy of technical imposition, favouring speech that has the ability to develop the conscience and progress of inhabitants and their organizations.
- The social struggle of inhabitants, and in particular the struggle against forced evictions, is an essential theme in the creation of debate and in the inhabitants' proposals that have to be actioned at a g-local level in order to have influence.
- Claiming the Right to the City and the social Rights of the inhabitants and the environment are the foundations of alternative policies to those established by the current Urban Social Pact that is governed by market supremacy and exclusion.
- Recovering the social function of cities because "another city is possible" if inhabitants' organizations play a leading role at the g-local level directly and in partnership with the public sector, the NGOs and the professionals who recognize the principles of supremacy of solidarity and of human and environmental rights are the foundations of an Alternative Urban Social Pact centred on ethical behaviour based on co-responsibility.
- The Right to Habitat is based on the Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR) that defend territorial sovereignty, the structural space for inhabitants, families, urban and rural communities and co-existence founded on the inclusion of all. The rights correspond to the obligations of the state with regards to housing, water and sanitation, education, health and participation; it is a legal base from which to gain respect for collective rights to land, natural resources, means of livelihood, energy, transport and leisure, to the Right to City, in particular, to food sovereignty and to climate justice.

¹⁸ Urban Way
http://www.habitants.org/the_urban_way

- There are common foundations for possible alliances between those fighting for the right to habitat led by inhabitants' organizations and those from other entities involved in the creation of "another world is possible" in the rural sector (Via Campesina), in production (trade unions) and in the protection of the environment as a common good (indigenous people).
- The inclusion of a diversity of gender, cultures, origins and different skills functioning as cross-cutting and transforming themes that focus on housing and urbanism policies, initiated by the independence of inhabitants' organizations and continued with dialogue with organizations, networks, NGOs and institutions that share this principle.



From the working-class neighbourhoods of Dakar to the World Assembly of Inhabitants (Dakar, February 6th 2011)

5. The direct results: creation of a shared and solidarity-based structure between glocal inhabitants

- A total of 352 participants (that registered) from 44 countries from all continents were involved in the WAI event in Dakar. Given the logistical difficulties, not everybody was accounted for in the WAI register so it is estimated that the number of participants was at least twice as many, especially given the local inhabitants' organizations. The important presence of quantity, quality and origin at the WAI resulting from the participation of inhabitants, activists and leaders, was a factor in the enlargement of the process on a global scale and in the countries of origin, particularly with regards to Africa and the host nation.

“... the Dakar WAI is a major event because it is in Africa, it will highlight the urban realities of Africa. It is important that the event attracts the widest participation as well as publicity so that we can bring the situation of Africa's cities to the attention of the world.”
(Mike Davies-IAI, WSF Dakar
2011, *Inhabitants' Memory*)



*Reading the Dakar Declaration at Village des Habitants
(Dakar, February 10th 2011)*

- The activities, the meetings and the exchanges enlarged and consolidated the convergence of networks and movements, laying the foundations for the creation of the Via Urbana (Urban Way), a common space of solidarity uniting inhabitants' organizations and urban social movements on a global scale in order to exchange experiences of struggles and alternative ideas, share strategies, and reinforce global solidarity with local battles for the right to housing and the city, without frontiers. The approval of the Dakar Declaration of the World Assembly of Inhabitants¹⁹ is important not only for its content, but also because, for the first time, all major international networks for the right to habitat constituted a Liaison Committee, that also recognized the WAI Steering Committees.

For these reasons it must be highlighted that the Liaison Committee is a key achievement of the WAI, as it should be a durable tool favouring dialogue, co-ordination and the growing influence of the content, solidarity and alternative and activist initiatives in support of the right to habitat.

Even if the different backgrounds, political and socio-cultural roots and geographical origins were the cause of a certain amount of difficulty during the dialogue, they nonetheless provide a richness because they bring different approaches to tackling problems and finding adequate solutions on several levels.

First task: the drafting of a common plan of action and platform following on from the content of the WAI process, with a view to co-ordinating the October Days. The IAI and the WAI Steering

¹⁹ Dakar Declaration of the World Assembly of Inhabitants. Convergence of inhabitants for the right to habitat.

http://www.habitants.org/the_urban_way/world_assembly_of_inhabitants/subscribe_the_declaration_of_the_world_assembly_of_inhabitants

Committees are involved in forming Steering Committees of a global federation of inhabitants' organizations on a territorial level involving all the networks as well as the myriad of organizations outside the network. These Committees will therefore provide the foundations for the establishment of the Urban and Community Way which will be implemented on the occasion of the next World Assembly of Inhabitants, due to take place at the WSF in Tunis in 2013.

- The activities, meetings and exchanges established concrete agreements between inhabitants' organizations, local authorities and other stakeholders for tackling evictions. The different actors take action according to their own abilities but continue to work in co-ordination.
- The diverse initiatives have nurtured involvement and co-ordination not only between the various networks fighting for the right to habitat but also with other networks involved in several areas of activity.

"...the fact of having representatives from different areas of the world supporting the work being done in Africa and its different regions was a major achievement for the WAI..." (Ana Sugranyes-HIC, WSF, Dakar 2011, Inhabitants' Memory)

6. Development of agreements for running the Inhabitants' Network responsibly

To strengthen agreements with:

- **Amnesty International:** in order to co-ordinate the Zero Evictions Campaign with the Demand Dignity Campaign on all continents, starting with Africa. Thanks to this agreement, a demonstration was organised, in co-ordination with a local mobilisation, in front of the Ghanaian Embassy in Dakar during the WAI. It succeeded in blocking the planned eviction of 25,000 people.
- **Witness:** to develop video advocacy globally in the fight against evictions, particularly those resulting from economic development.
- **Local Authorities Forum:** their 9th World Assembly approved a Declaration of support for the WAI²⁰, meaning that they are committed to guaranteeing the fundamental rights of everyone and, importantly, to leading actions alongside inhabitants' organizations with a view to declaring areas as "anti-eviction zones", approving anti-eviction orders²¹ and organising "chains of solidarity" so that this declaration does not reach a dead end.

²⁰ Dakar Declaration – local authorities in favor of housing rights
http://www.habitants.org/news/local_autorithies/dakar_declaration_local_authorities_in_fav_or_of_housing_rights

²¹ France, a United Front of anti-evictions Mayors
http://www.habitants.org/news/local_autorithies/france_a_united_front_of_anti-evictions_mayors



Presentation of the FAL Declaration supporting the WAI at the Village des Habitants (Dakar, February 10th 2011)

7. Commitment to global responsibility: how did the final WAI Declaration come about?

The WAI provided a shared space where everyone organized and took part in initiatives, including the IAI, which organized and took part in workshops and meetings in Guédiawaye as well as at the University, playing a real unifying role both for the networks involved in the right to habitat and other networks.

Thanks to this approach, the final plenary Assembly was able to approve a Declaration that summarized the desire to develop the unifying dynamics beyond the Dakar event and introduced the Liaison Committee and collective commitments to create a platform and global mobilization for the right to habitat, in particular during the World Days in October 2011-2012.

The Dakar Declaration: Convergence of inhabitants for the right to habitat²²

In the last ten years, articulations and convergences between activists, social movements, inhabitants´ and neighbourhood organizations as well as technical supports that defend the right to habitat have been consolidated.

Findings

We gather around the struggle for the realization of Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ESCR) that are fundamental in defending the structural place of the family, rural and urban communities, and coexistence based on the inclusion of all people. We refer to the ESCR that are related to habitat and which correspond to state obligations related to housing, water and sanitation, education, health and citizen participation. These are the legal basis for demanding collective rights to land, natural resources, livelihoods, energy, transportation and recreation, and especially the right to the city, food sovereignty and climate justice. Due to the close relationship with the family, home, neighbourhood, village and public space, women are principle protagonists in local struggles to defend the right to habitat. Women, as well as children, disabled people, the evicted, homeless, nomads, refugees and migrants are the main people excluded from these rights and therefore must be recognized and their rights defended in all of these struggles. The obstacles towards realizing the right to habitat are multiplied throughout the world, regardless of local cultural differences. Therefore, it is our duty to denounce real estate and land speculation practices that threaten the land of the poorest, most disadvantaged and vulnerable populations with land grabbing, destruction of neighbourhoods and villages, gentrification of long-standing neighbourhoods, rising rents compared with the stagnation of incomes, mega-project and mega-event planning and development which violate the right of communities to remain in their traditional homes, armed conflicts and occupied territories, "natural" disasters, and the effects of climate change which provoke floods, landslides and water, air and soil pollution. All of these territorial phenomena generate mass forced evictions, increasingly affecting rural and urban populations throughout the world.

Proposals

We, local, national, regional, continental and global organizations gathered here in the process of building the World Assembly of Inhabitants, pledge to continue united in building solidarity, so that all people may have the right to live in peace and with dignity in the countryside and in the city.

We also commit to participate in the Global Campaign for the Right to Habitat, held yearly on the first Monday of October.

On October 3, 2011 and October 1, 2012, the themes that will bring us together around the world are: (i) the causes and effects of forced evictions, the suffering and impoverishment of people affected by rural and urban habitat problems; and (ii) solidarity with activists for the right to habitat who have been victimized by repression and violence against their

²² Dakar Declaration of the World Assembly of Inhabitants. Convergence of inhabitants for the right to habitat

http://www.habitants.org/the_urban_way/world_assembly_of_inhabitants/subscribe_the_declaration_of_the_world_assembly_of_inhabitants

civil and political rights.

The annual campaign for the right to habitat will be organized in an inclusive and diverse manner, coordinated by all those involved in habitat struggles throughout the world by means of marches, protests, demonstrations, occupations, and public debates and meetings, among other expressions. The circulation of the campaign will be done primarily by social networks through the internet, and will also be publicized on the websites of the social movements, networks and organizations engaged in the campaign.

To meet these commitments, organizations and networks are constituting a Liaison Committee that is committed to agreeing on a platform and a plan of action that are the result of meetings organized by the inhabitants organisations in the popular neighborhoods and at the university campus in the framework of the WSF Dakar, to render concrete the solidarity to fight against the violations of rights that are rooted in common causes around the world.

On February 10, 2011 in Dakar, the following networks and organizations sign this commitment:

International networks:

International Alliance of Inhabitants (IAI); Habitat International Coalition (HIC); WAI International Steering Committee; WAI Regional Steering Committee; LOCOA - Leaders and Organizers of Community Organization in Asia; No-Vox

National and local inhabitants organizations:

ACIDAK Asociación Comité Interbidonville, (Dakar, Senegal); AHTB, Association des Habitants et Travailleurs de Baraka (Dakar, Senegal); Amandla Centre of Zimbabwe (Zimbabwe); Assembly to End Poverty (USA); A Város Mindenkié (Hongrie); CAES (Paraguay); CDV (México); CHRA (Zimbabwe); Colectivo para el desarrollo del peru de villa maria dl triunfo (Perú); Comité de Gestion des Inondations et de Déguerpissement de Médina Goumars (Guédiawaye, Senegal); WAI National Steering Committee; CONAM (Brasil); CONAPAMAG (Guatemala); Coordination duped investors (Russie); Coopohabitat (Republica Dominicana); Cooperativa de reciclado de villa 31 (Argentina); Coopérative Coralli (Italie); COORDINADORA DE COLONIAS UNIDAS (México); DAL, Droit au Logement (France); EMAD, Entente des Mouvements et Associations de Développement (Dakar, Senegal); Famemg – Minas Gerais (Brasil); FBFF – Ceará (Brasil); FEDEVI (Argentina); Federación de Cooperativas Todos juntos (Argentina); FOVELIC (Perú); GIU (Perú); Grupo puertorriqueño de solidaridad con la niñez Dominico-Haiana CPNDH (Puerto Rico); Mouvement And Soukali Médina Goumars (Dakar, Senegal); Movimiento Nuevo Encuentro (Argentina); National Tenants Union (Nigeria); Omunga (Angola); POHDH (Haiti); PPEHRC (USA); PROUD and National Forum for the Urban Poor (India); Red Metropolitana Inquilinos (Venezuela); RNHC (Cameroun); Shelter for the Poor (Bangladesh); Thames Valley Gypsy Council (UK); Tenants Union (Russie); Tonderai Ndira Housing Cooperative (Zimbabwe); UCISV-Ver (México); Unione Inquilini (Italie); UNION POPULAR VALLE GOMEZ, D.F. (México); USA/Canada Alliance of Inhabitants (USACAI); Youth governance and environmental programme (Kenya)

Support:

ABONG, Brazilian Association of NGOs; AITEC, Association Internationale des Techniciens et Chercheurs (France); ALOP, Asociación Latinoamericana de Organizaciones de Promoción; CENCA (Perú); CERPAC, Centre de Recherche Populaire pour l'Action Citoyenne (Senegal); Dignity International; ENDA-Economie Populaire (Senegal); ENDA-Relais pour le Développement Urbain Participé, (Senegal); FAL, Forum des Autorités Locales; Handicap International; Intermondes (Senegal); Plateforme DESC Sénégal – RADI; WISEEP (Ghana)

N.B. 364 more signatories at the time this Memory went to print.

8. Reflections on glocal actions based on co-responsibility in preparation for the next stages

The Network is putting the focus on the relationship between itself, the community and other actors. Not from a one-dimensional position, but with permanent interaction at the glocal level.

"... It is interesting on this journey, from the 2001 WSF until now, 10 years later, to take stock of and clearly understand the struggle waged by inhabitants in different countries, communities and cities to construct their cities as well as their rights; this is what makes it possible to turn both political declarations and future declarations into a reality, and we need to support inhabitants' campaigns but also to claim our role in governance. What we are talking about is joining in with international mobilization..."
(Pedro Franco- IAI Coordinator AL and Caribbean, Contribution to the World Urban Forum, 2010).

Supporting the emergence of a new type of glocal inhabitant

The Network, via the WAI, supports the emergence of a new type of inhabitant: inhabitants who are totally involved in the local social fabric and very aware of the global challenge, capable of committing to the fight to defend collective rights and responsibilities so that they can assume their role as co-builders and co-governors of their cities, rather than remaining mere users-customers of the territories.

In addition, these inhabitants are part of associations, social movements and communities, are tenants, home owners, homeless, live in communes and cooperatives, and are native peoples and people in marginalized districts all across the world.

In view of this diversity, we need to recognize that the work undertaken by organizations in various forms expresses "people's awareness of their own responsibilities, leading to a personal and collective behaviour ethic that could establish a cultural body created by the community", for example, like the concept of belonging to the land and not owning the land, as established by the Mapuche communities in Argentinian Patagonia.

We also find this in the tradition of social movements' struggle throughout history, which seeks above all to confront "others" with their responsibilities; it is present in the struggles for the right to land and housing and in violent confrontations during forced evictions, regardless of the country (Argentina, Kenya, Dominican Republic, China, Egypt, Turkey, etc.) or region (Latin America, Europe, Africa or Asia) in question.²³ The UPU's role in helping people's voices to be heard and supporting the construction of collective knowledge

The Network uses the UPU as a tool to encourage the construction of these new inhabitants' collective and individual knowledge, creating a culture of responsibility. In 2010, the UPU focused on assisting the systemization process and preparing for the WAI in February 2011. The UPU's working methodology centred on putting together a series of videos, reduced to short video clips, to express inhabitants' experiences, claims and struggles and create a co-produced living archive of inhabitants' memories, to be used to reflect on and analyze strategies and methods employed to claim the right to habitat. The UPU also set up a workshop to create the Inhabitants' Memory²⁴ in four languages that, by creating a Timeline (2000-2011), enabled inhabitants to recognize their development at the glocal level.



*Creation of the 2000-2011 Timeline
at the workshop to create the Inhabitants' Memory
(Guédiawaye, Dakar, February 9th 2011)*

²³ How People Face Evictions, Yves Cabannes, Silvia Guimarães Yafai, Cassidy Johnson, BSHF, 2010

http://www.habitants.org/news/library/how_people_face_evictions

²⁴ Inhabitants' Memory, Sharing Knowledge En Route Towards the World Assembly of Inhabitants

http://www.habitants.org/urban_popular_university/inhabitants_memory

Activists' and inhabitants' involvement and participation in this process led to an increase in discussions on local problems and objectives with a global perspective, extending the network and initiatives from grassroots organizations and movements. One example was the Latin American participation in the first Citizens' Assembly in the Southern Cone, held in Chile in November 2010.²⁵

There is no doubt that the strategic choice to encourage the transmission of people's words and construction of the Inhabitants' Memory as the cornerstone of the process to construct the Network and analyze the problems and their causes, is vital in creating a culture of responsibility. The WAI process was successful in bringing together people from around 50 countries on all continents who, without any external funding, made a real effort to be present. The process supported the importance of inhabitants' voices by listening to their desire to have their right to housing respected, and to assume their responsibilities as builders of the cities of the future, not merely as users and customers of the territories, but as the creators of the future.

The urban question is not a local question: for inhabitants, it is a question with three layers of responsibility

The urban question cannot be confined to the local level: it is a global question, for example, concerning issues such as investments and the migration of millions of people, due to the processes of globalization and changes affecting their territories. It is impossible to address the habitat situation on the level of local struggles only. It requires alliances at the national, regional and global levels and, as the process showed, recognition of inhabitants' rights directly through their own voices.

Inhabitants express themselves via their organizations and are immersed in a local and global exclusion process. They are therefore facing a problem concerning responsibility that places them permanently in a position where their responsibilities are confronted with public institutions' responsibilities, or with the law's responsibilities or where the responsibilities of each leader are confronted with the responsibilities of her/his organization. In addition, their inclusion in international networks exposes them to the irresponsibility shown by supranational powers (the United Nations, European Commission, IMF, World Bank, investors, etc.). Responsibility can therefore seem unclear, because they position it in the glocal movement (organization) or the state (local, provincial and national).

There is no common recognition of individual and collective responsibility according to an on-going process, as illustrated in the "Charter of Human Responsibilities".²⁶

²⁵ Primera Asamblea de Ciudadanos del Cono Sur. Iquique - Chile 5 al 7 de noviembre 2010 http://www.habitants.org/la_voie_urbaine/assemblee_mondiale_des_habitants/preparation_de_l_assemblee_mondiale_des_habitants/primera_asamblea_de_ciudadanos_del_cono_sur._iquique-chile_5_al_7_de_novembre_2010

²⁶ Charter of Human Responsibilities <http://www.charter-human-responsibilities.net/spip.php?page=sommaire&lang=en>

Leaders often feel triply responsible vis-à-vis the authorities, the international and supranational powers, and their comrades in the struggle. This means that spaces of reflection and action, where the focus is on the collective subject, stimulate the concept of collective co-responsibility, conferred both on social actors and politicians in a position to exercise their own responsibilities.

Both organizations and inhabitants prioritize action and an urgent response to the problems of their neighbours rather than reflecting on action. Eager to solve everyday problems, a lack of time, money, physical space, etc. stop them from reflecting on responsibility, but the responsible exercise of their activities is always present in their discussions.

Convergences, alliances and partnerships to find solutions and build another possible world

The obstacles to implementing the right to habitat are multiplying everywhere in the world, despite cultural differences and different local responsibilities.

However, the last ten years have seen the consolidation of processes for linking together and creating convergences between militants, social movements, inhabitants' and neighbourhood organizations as well as technical support bodies defending the right to habitat. In addition, alliances have been established with social organizations involved in different areas of building "another possible world" as well as partnerships with local authorities, universities and foundations that share alternative paradigms based on the right to housing and the city and inhabitants' responsibilities.

There have been an increasing number of meetings on the struggles to implement ESCR, which are key to defending the family's structural space, rural and urban communities and cohabitation based on the inclusion of all. The Network has focused on the ESCR relating to the right to habitat. These rights correspond to states' obligations in terms of housing, water and sanitation, education, health and participation; they provide the legal basis for demanding collective rights to the land, natural resources, livelihoods, energy, transport and recreation, in a very specific form, the right to the city, food sovereignty and climate justice.

Because they are rooted in the family, housing, the neighbourhood, the town and public spaces, women are the main actors in local struggles to defend the right to habitat. Those who suffer most from being excluded from their rights are these women, along with children, disabled people, the evicted, the homeless, nomads and refugees, and the Network therefore needs to recognize and defend their rights in every campaign.

The Network therefore promotes spaces of responsible action at different levels to denounce: the pressures of real estate and land value on the poorest, most destitute and vulnerable sectors; land grabbing; the destruction of working-class neighbourhoods and rural villages; the gentrification of historical districts; the increase in rents compared to the stagnation in income; mega-projects and mega-events whose planning and execution violate communities' right to stay in the places where they have

traditionally lived; armed conflicts and occupation of territories; so-called natural disasters and the effects of climate change that cause flooding, landslides and contaminated water, air and soil; inequalities and discrimination affecting women, and racism towards nomads and migrants affecting their right to habitat. All these territorial phenomena generate multiple forced evictions that, with increasing frequency, affect many rural and urban communities right across the world. They are the main indicator of violations of the right to habitat; the struggle to defend secure tenure is the main challenge chosen to promote the exercise of inhabitants' responsibilities.

The different backgrounds, political and socio-cultural roots and geographical origins were the cause of a certain amount of difficulty during the dialogue on responsibility between the different organizations and networks. However, these differences were a huge source of richness because they brought numerous different approaches to tackling problems and finding adequate solutions on several levels.

We believe that the dilemma lies in the diffuse conception between responsibility and justice. Inhabitants and their organizations consider their demands to be ethical and expect an answer on the same level. However, and particularly in the face of violent responses from governments, they consider that they have exceeded their responsibility and cannot see other alternatives of action in their expectation of a fair response.

"...DAL supports people experiencing housing difficulties, for example, people living in inadequate or precarious housing, under threat of eviction because they cannot pay their rent or in buildings the landlord wants to sell, etc.

There are groups of around 10 people who meet to tackle the same type of housing-related problem. Once a month all the groups meet together, working on all aspects of the overall strategy concerning access to housing. Then each group will look at specific forms of action in relation to its concrete housing problem. It is important that each group is able to communicate its campaign, its deliberations and its specific action strategy followed by a convergence where the groups express themselves as a whole." Annie Pourre – DAL, Droit au Logement, Inhabitants' Memory, Bobigny, 2010.

Conflicts of interest can be observed at both the political and economic level inside and outside organizations with respect to governments and local and international pressures. Balances of power generate tensions that, in certain situations, alter responsible behaviour. We can see various examples in different cultures that set priorities in terms of taking responsibility. One example is provided by social organizations in Nairobi that, thanks to the international solidarity of the Zero Evictions Campaign,²⁷ succeeded in cancelling the country's external debt and, by means of a participative process, improved the quality of life in neighbourhoods. Another example is

²⁷ Zero Evictions Campaign
http://www.habitants.org/zero_evictions_campaign

provided by the inhabitants of Cameroon who took a responsible approach and promoted a partnership with their governments to develop public policies. We can find further examples in Mexico, Argentina, Brazil and Italy.

WAI: a step towards the Urban and Community Way

The Declaration of the World Assembly of Inhabitants led to the emergence of proposals that local, national, regional, continental and global organizations gathered together within the process of building the WAI undertake to work together to pursue the building up of solidarity and ensure that everyone enjoys the right to live well on our planet, that is to say, to live in peace, security, dignity and sustainably in the country and the city.

They also undertook to take part in the World Campaign for the Right to Habitat every year, held on the first Monday of October. On 3 October 2011 and 1 October 2012, the unifying themes around the world were: (i) the causes and effects of forced evictions, the suffering and impoverishment of people affected by rural and urban habitat problems; (ii) solidarity with activists campaigning for the right to habitat, victims of repression and violence affecting their civil and political rights.

The annual campaign for the right to habitat then took on an inclusive form, based on diversity, and was coordinated by the organizations involved in the struggle around the world. Methods used include denunciations, protests, occupations, demonstrations, public debates and meetings. The campaign was publicized via online social networks and, in particular, the websites of the movements, networks and social organizations committed to the struggle.

In order to manage these commitments, the organizations and networks set up a Liaison Committee tasked with agreeing on a platform and an action plan, resulting from the meetings organized by inhabitants in neighbourhoods and on the university campus at the Dakar WAI. This development gave concrete form to the solidarity already created in order to fight against violations of rights, the causes of which occur throughout the world.

To protect inhabitants' right and responsibility to be the builders, users and co-governors of their cities, and with the goal of creating and strengthening ties of solidarity, Network participants reaffirmed their desire to work in coordination on a plan addressing equality and mutual cooperation, from the local to the global level.

In conclusion, it is important to point out that the World Assembly of Inhabitants is just one stage; the next stage will be to form a true federation of all the organizations fighting for the right to housing at the global level and cement the Urban and Community Way, i.e. a shared path and space using shared tools to link together actions and solidarity at the glocal level.

It goes further than sharing experiences, proposing the task of building concrete solidarity, a common platform, which will reinforce inhabitants' organizations in a few years time and give them the capacity to meet the challenges of the revolutionary and systemic changes that inhabitants need, starting with the fight against evictions, so that they can become the "responsible owners" of their future.



*Singing the Inhabitants Anthem
(WAI, Dakar February 10th 2011)*

Inhabitants anthem Hymne des habitants

lyrics by-*paroles de*
**Jules Dumas
Nguebou**

**versión en
castellano**

english version

nous sommes habitants

nous sommes habitants
habitants du Cameroun
nous sommes habitants
habitants de tout quartier

nous-nous sommes mobilisés
pour défendre nous droits
nous-nous sommes tous
engagés
pour vivre dignement

nous sommes habitantes
habitantes d'Afrique
nous sommes habitantes
habitantes du monde entier

nous-nous sommes tous réunis
pour défendre nous toits
nous-nous sommes mobilisés
pour défendre nous lois

nous sommes unis
nous sommes divers
et nous sommes plus riches

nous sommes divers
nous sommes unis
et nous sommes plus forts

nous sommes habitants
habitants du Cameroun
nous sommes habitants
habitants de tout quartier

nous sommes unis
nous sommes divers
et nous sommes plus riches

nous sommes divers
nous sommes unis
et nous sommes plus forts

nous sommes habitantes
habitantes d'Afrique
nous sommes habitantes
habitantes du monde

nosotros somos habitantes

somos habitantes
habitantes de Camerún
somos habitantes
habitantes de cualquier barrio

nosotros nos hemos
movilizados
para defender nuestros
derechos
todos nosotros nos hemos
comprometido
a vivir dignamente

somos habitantes
habitantes de África
somos habitantes
habitantes del mundo entero

todos nosotros nos hemos
reunido
para defender nuestros
derechos
todos nosotros nos hemos
movilizados
para defender nuestras leyes

nosotros somos unidos
nosotros somos diversos
y nosotros somos más ricos

nosotros somos unidos
nosotros somos diversos
y nosotros somos más fuertes

nosotros somos habitantes
habitantes de Camerún
nosotros somos habitantes
habitantes de cualquier barrio

nosotros somos unidos
nosotros somos diversos
y nosotros somos más ricos

nosotros somos unidos
nosotros somos diversos
y nosotros somos más fuertes

somos habitantes
habitantes de África
somos habitantes
habitantes del mundo

we are inhabitants

we are inhabitants
inhabitants of Cameroon
we are inhabitants
inhabitants of any
neighbourhood

we are mobilised
to defend our rights
we have engaged ourselves
to live in all dignity

we are inhabitants
inhabitants of Africa
we are inhabitants
inhabitants of
the entire world

we have united ourselves
to defend our roofs
we are mobilised
to defend our laws

we are united
we are diverse
and we are healthier

we are united
we are diverse
and we become stronger

we are inhabitants
inhabitants of Cameroon
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we are inhabitants
inhabitants of Africa
we are inhabitants
inhabitants of the world

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Malick Gaye, Senegal, ENDA
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Joseph Jones, United Kingdom, Thames Valley Gypsy Council
Stanley Mwaura Nderitu, Kenya, Youth Governance and Environmental Programme
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