

Call from Rio towards the World Assembly of Inhabitants (WSF Dakar 2011)

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All cities and rural areas are experiencing a structural crisis, resulting from the implementation of urban policies in favour of global capitalism, which is expressed through a variety of problems: the loss of the social function of cities; the commercial exploitation of economic, social, cultural and environmental rights; deepening social, economic and gender inequalities; the absence of democracy and social participation in decision-making processes that are in the public interest; an increase in insecurity despite the rise of police and military violence; the dramatic increase in forced evictions as a pillar of capitalist urbanism; the criminalisation of social movements and the marginalisation of good practice in the social production of habitat; the environmental degradation, forcing the poor to live in high-risk areas; the failure of governments to comply with regulatory frameworks established at national and international levels to ensure the right to housing; the ineffectiveness of UN-Habitat, dedicated to strengthening its bureaucracy and thus leaving room for speculative capitalism, responsible for the housing/real estate bubble.

Faced with this situation, initiatives have emerged from around the world, of grassroots organisations and networks of inhabitants heroically resisting forced evictions, struggling against privatisation processes and the liberalisation of the housing sector, occupying empty properties and vacant urban land, joining together in solidarity to defend the right to housing and to the city. At the same time they build alternatives, developing approaches that feed into urban and rural policies in order to achieve sustainable human development; many of these experiences are supported and strengthened by local governments and dedicated academics and professionals.

In this way, the extraordinary capacity and maturity of urban social movements to engage creatively, efficiently and cooperatively in providing solutions to a range of urban and rural problems is demonstrated.

In Rio de Janeiro, within the context of the Urban Social Forum, this critical situation has been analysed by people and organisations from Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, Dominican Republic, Ghana, Haiti, Italy, Mexico, Nigeria, Peru, Russia, Senegal, South Africa, Uganda, USA, Venezuela, Zimbabwe, as well as the International Alliance of Inhabitants (IAI), Jubilee South, HIC and CCS networks.

Sharing common principles recognised in the WSF Charter of Principles and the Charter of San Salvador, in the World Assembly of Inhabitants (Mexico, October 2000) and in the World Assembly of Citizens for solidarity and a responsible world (Lille, October 2001), among others; and supported by the Call to unite the urban social movements and inhabitants, we, the inhabitants with a commitment to society and democracy, we have taken a decisive step to go beyond statements and declarations and begin to define strategies and collective actions. This requires the establishment of a programme, an organisational structure and the strengthening of alliances in order to guarantee the success of our struggle.

This is the foremost reason for convening the WORLD ASSEMBLY OF INHABITANTS at Dakar in

2011, as part of the WSF framework, a common space for exchanging our experiences, sharing analysis and defining alternatives and collective strategies for struggle; a place to develop and approve a platform and plan of action that unifies our efforts and contributes towards achieving the Right to the City, taking a leading role in defending our ideals and social interests. In other words, building the 'Urban Way' ('Via Urbana').

At the heart of this analysis we have agreed on the following:

- the integration of the Global Joint Committee and the creation everywhere of National and Regional Joint Committees for the Promotion of the World Assembly of Inhabitants, Dakar 2011;
- to extend participation to other social movements, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and democratic governments of the world;
- to establish an international platform to defend our rights;
- to define coordination, information and communication mechanisms that will enable the development of this democratic process;
- to promote this Call in alternative spaces, particularly in the regional and thematic Social Forums that will take place in the run-up to Dakar 2011.

Finally, we reaffirm our conviction to strengthen unity and issue a call for solidarity among all organisations, respecting diversity, multiculturalism and autonomy.

INHABITANTS OF THE WORLD UNITED FOR THE RIGHT TO THE CITY!

Promoters :

South Africa: Abalhali

Argentina: Federación de Villas, Centro Integral Comunitario, Ex AU3

Bangladesh: Shelter for the Poor

Brazil: CONAM, MNLM, CMP

USA: PPEHRC, US Alliance of Inhabitants

Ghana: Women Land Access Trust

Haiti: PAPDA

Italy: Unione Inquilini

Mexico: Unión Popular Valle Gomez, UCISV-Pobladores,, Coordinadoras de _ Colonias Unidas, MUP-CND,COPEVI

Nigeria: National Union of Tenants

Peru: FOVELIC, CENCA

Dominican Republic: Coophabitat

Russia: Union of Coordinating Soviets

Senegal: CERPAC

Uganda: Women Land Access Trust

Venezuela: Red Metropolitana de Inquilinos

Zimbabwe: WAI Promoter

IAI, HIC, Jubileo Sur, CCS Programa de Vivienda para América Latina

Approved by the whole of Urban Social Forum (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 25th March 2010)

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