HIC - Minutes of the HIC General Assembly, Dakar 2011

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HIC-GS

February 5th, 9:00am to 6:30pm

1. Welcome

HIC President Davinder Lamba and Khady Diagne from Enda-Rup (Dakar) welcomed the General Assembly and expressed the Coalition's solidarity with the people's struggles in Tunisia and Egypt, as well as with human rights militants who have been imprisoned.

2. Verification of quorum

Thirty-five people attended the General Assembly (GA) meeting, including participants from seven countries in the Francophone Africa region and thirteen other countries around the world. Sixteen of the participants were women nineteen were men. Eighteen HIC members had the right to vote. See details in Annex 1.

3. Review and approval of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

4. Review and approval of the minutes from Rio de Janeiro, 2010

The GA minutes from Rio de Janeiro were approved, with one comment made by Korotimy Théra regarding the fact that the Rio minutes make no mention of the HIV/AIDS workshop.

5. General Secretariat's Audit

The General Secretariat financial resources audit was presented to the GA by the treasurer, Léon Guy Mfomou. It was difficult for members to understand the report's contents, because, as Yves Joël Zoffoun remarked, it is written in Spanish and is therefore hard for francophone participants to understand and approve. At the time of the GA meeting, the financial reports of other structures were not yet ready because the meeting was held at the beginning of the year. In addition, it was noted that certain focal points do not present their financial reports because they do not directly administer finances on behalf of HIC, as is the case in Francophone Africa.

Decided: Given that the majority of the 2010 financial reports are not yet ready, the GA voted on the 2009 financial statements (presented in the Annual Report) and will vote on the 2010 financial statements when they are ready later in the year.

Motion approved: 14 in favour, 4 abstentions

6. Regional and thematic reports

The annual reports of regional and thematic structures are shared to identify the challenges that should be taken up at the level of the global Coalition. These are necessary in order to evaluate the Coalition's impacts and HIC members' and structures' capacities, at the local and global levels. In the Middle East and North Africa region, there are many great challenges, especially when acting against housing and land rights violations and denouncing them as crimes in the case of armed conflicts, war and occupation. We must work to obtain international recognition that forced eviction is a crime. In general, we must reinforce HIC's capacity to denounce and protest against housing rights violations.
The participants discussed the common forces that are the causes of their local struggles and why it is necessary to unite as a global Coalition. It is now more necessary than ever to apply our discourse to ourselves in order to make the Coalition more effective; it is indispensable to re-think our actions according to our values, and this is a great challenge for the whole Coalition.
Another challenge is the financial and institutional stability of HIC, a matter which affects the whole Coalition and which we must address while taking into account the independent character of HIC structures.
In regards to the key terms developed by HIC over more than 30 years, it is fundamental to combine our specialties with other, broader themes, for example themes that link the town and countryside in the context of food sovereignty, water and energy.

7. Review of the HIC global strategy

Structures must develop a common plan of action, reach an agreement on operational rules, and improve democratic practices in the management of the Coalition. It is therefore fundamental to develop and consolidate communication tools such as HICademy and the Member Space, as well as knowledge and concrete solutions for the habitat issues in which HIC holds its main competences.

Working groups were formed to review the Coalition's 2005-2007 strategic lines and to construct new strategic lines for the period from 2011-2013. The results of the working groups can be found in Annex 2 and 3. The General Secretariat will present a proposed text incorporating the results of the different groups within the next three months.

February 6th, 9:00am to 3:30pm

8. Book launch "Villes pour toutes et tous" [Cities for All]

A presentation was given of the French edition of the HIC publication "Cities for All" which was originally presented in 2010 during the World Urban Forum in Rio de Janeiro. It is important for the Coalition to present its work on the right to the city in the context of the World Social Forum. The book includes theoretical reflections as well as case studies on local struggles for the right to the city worldwide. The decentralised activities carried out by the World Assembly of Inhabitants are completely linked with the purposes of the book.

9. Habitat et Participation: Habitat groupé (co-housing) and a world map of social movements

Habitat groupé is a housing alternative formed of a group of people which is being practiced more frequently for social, economic and ecological reasons. A Charter of common values is drawn up by each habitat groupé, which includes obligations for solidarity between inhabitants (welcoming people in difficult situations, of different generations, etc.) and community projects (collective kitchens or gardens, social economy, etc.).

Habitat et Participation (HeP) is currently working on the creation of a resource website on Urban Habitat in the world, with the support of social movements, associations and structures. Through the intercultural dialogue between (urban) habitat actors, this website will assist in the comprehension of the habitat realities of different groups and will reinforce HIC capacities to make proposals or recommendations to be addressed with politicians. See the HeP presentation in Annex 4.

10. Collaboration WITNESS-HIC

In 2010, WITNESS decided to extend its current work to end forced evictions through a three-year global campaign. Along these lines, WITNESS and HIC began working together, exploring how documentation through video could be used strategically to advance HIC s advocacy work at local, regional and international levels.

To achieve these objectives, WITNESS and HIC will collaborate to provide video training to a few HIC members, with support for filming and strategic distribution to key decision-makers, reporting on the human rights violations that result from forced evictions. The presentation made by WITNESS to the GA can be found in Annex 5.

11. HIC Strategies in the WSF

Activities were organised in the Village of Inhabitants tent, as well as in the Guédiawaye neighbourhood, in collaboration with No-Vox and AIH (World Assembly of Inhabitants) to build regional and international strategies for housing and land rights. In addition, HIC organised a field visit to the Baraka neighbourhood to learn about the situation of forced eviction that this community is facing, as well as a field visit to Gorée Island, a memorial site of the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

12. Next HIC meeting

Due to financial and other logistical circumstances, no decision was made about the location of the next HIC meeting. For the moment, two proposals were made: Rio de Janeiro, coinciding with Rio+20 in May 2012; and Rabat (Morocco).

It is also important to reinforce the Coalition s work through internet sources and to organise more Skype conferences between GA meetings. It must also be stressed that work towards HIC global meetings must be done in advance in order to raise funds, buy plane tickets and complete visa applications.