

IYSH Global NGO Forum and Policy Seminar

As reported in SINA 13, there were four regional initiatives to document the work of shelter NGOs as part of the activities for International Year of Shelter for the Homeless - IYSH 1987. Documentation was coordinated by Mazingira Institute in English and Portuguese speaking Africa, ENDA in French speaking Africa, ASAG in Asia and CEUR-IIED-CLACSO in Latin America. A series of regional meetings were held as part of this UNCHS Habitat-sponsored initiative. These culminated in a Global Forum for NGOs held in Nairobi 1st-4th April 1987, jointly organised by Habitat International Council (HIC), International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), le Groupe de Recherches et Echanges Technologiques (GRET) and Mazingira Institute.

The IYSH Global Forum brought together a large number of grass-roots, indigenous and international NGOs from all over the world. The level of energy and commitment of these organisations and the excitement of exchange across continents of the voices of the poor and homeless, shone through the working groups and plenary sessions. The street children of Nairobi, the pavement dwellers of Bombay, women building workers of India, and support organisations working with slum dwellers in over 30 countries, merged as a group.

The Forum was preceded by a Policy Seminar where about 70 participants worked to produce a policy statement on NGOs and Shelter. The Policy Seminar, held from 30th March to 1st April, was attended by interested donor agencies as well as community based organizations, local and international NGOs. It produced the Limuru Declaration, printed in full over the next four pages, and subsequently endorsed by the Global Forum.

This powerful statement has set the agenda for action clearly on the move to establish shelter as a right, to oppose forced evictions, to promote self-help through community based organisations, to promote enabling programs by governments (land, services and credit, not high cost housing), and to focus on the unmet needs of women and children.

This declaration ought to form the basis for NGO action in the field of shelter to the year 2000. It should also guide donors and governments on working with NGOs and CBOs (community based organisations). But it was not the only output of the Global Forum and Policy Seminar. Based on their new-found friendship and solidarity, the NGOs moved on to set a new agenda for action for Habitat International Council (HIC) and to transform it into a new body - Habitat International Coalition - combining the strengths of the CBOs and NGOs in the different regions. These developments are summarized on Page 10.



The working group on networks and coalitions at the Global NGO Forum. Left to right: Malick Gaye (ENDA, Senegal), John Turner (AHAS, U.K) Jai Sen (Unnayan, India), Barry Pinsky (Rooftops, Canada) and sitting Ana Sugranyes (IDESAC, Guatemala)