



# Habitat International Coalition

## General Assembly 2004

Convent dels Angels – MACBA. Barcelona

Monday, 13<sup>th</sup> September 2004

### 1. Revision of the Quorum

70 persons present at the General Assembly (representing 42 HIC-Members):

### 2. Revision and approval of the Agenda

(unanimous)

### 3. President welcomed the Assembly, presented the draft text “What is HIC?”

(Annex 1)

### 4. Approval of the Minutes of the previous General Assembly, Porto Alegre, January 2003.

Context information given by the General Secretary

- Only 39 HIC members were present at the General Assembly in Porto Alegre
- Changes of the HIC Presidency and General Secretary makes these minutes a bit extemporaneous in relation to actual HIC processes.
- Suggestion of approval.

Joseph Schechta summarized the main points of these minutes (Annex 2)

*Comments of the Assembly*

- Presidency explains that it is impossible to bring together all HIC members.
- Tabitha Siwale suggests that in the future HIC should pay for the assistance of a certain number of HIC members in order to ensure a minimal proportional regional representation.

**Decision 1** (31 votes, 1 abstention): Approval of the Minutes of the previous General Assembly, Porto Alegre, January 2003.

### 5. Progress Report by HIC General Secretary, Ana Sugranyes

Main themes (Annex 3):

- Installation of the GS in Chile
- Communication among HIC structures and HIC members.
- Membership
- Global activities, mainly activities organized in Barcelona.

Aspects not included in Annex 3:

- Follow-up and financial support of General Secretariat by Misereor.
- GS commitment for the next three years is to support decentralization and empowerment of regional HIC bodies.

*Comments of the Assembly*

- German Lomtev stressed that GS should orientate its work to find new sponsors.
- Tabitha Siwale congratulated the GS and stressed that it is necessary to consider and to confront the lack of electronic means of communication in some regions.
- Cesare Ottolini believes that nowadays HIC is starting a new phase in which HIC should not be anymore thought as a coalition, but as a forum. A constructive critic should point to

reflect on the relationship between HIC and other movements toward another world. It won't be enough to make new working groups on new issues, but perhaps to re-define the Coalition. The last few years show the emergence of new organizations, networks, etc. at a global level and trying to bring them all into our coalition is not a realistic perspective. Unity at the global could be reached through alliances, perhaps through a World Social Urban Forum, what supposes a new management perspective. For example to concentrate resources in SPH is not an adequate strategy.

- Enrique Ortiz clarifies that SPH is only one of many fronts in which HIC is working.
- Kirkee Sha stresses that it is a task of HIC Members to transform HIC in a stronger organization and not only from a financial perspective.

#### *Responses of the GS.*

- Fund recollection is a long term challenge
- In the last months GS visited at least 8 donor agencies, which are willing to cooperate, but projects must be prepared by the members of HIC.
- Even though electronic communication is not a reality in the Third World, it is necessary to have electronic communication with the focal point, who should distribute information through the respective region, that's the task.

### **6. Financial Audit Report by HIC Treasurer, Joseph Schechla**

Financial report reflects the accounting of the General Secretariat, not the regional or thematic structures of HIC. GS budget support administrative costs, Board meeting and global activities that concern all members. It does not include support to projects of a region. This financial audit settles accounts and gives a starting point for the future in this transitional period.

Brief presentation of the financial report for the period April 2001 – September 2004 (Annex 4)

#### *Comments of the Assembly*

- Michael Kane offered a motion for approval of General Secretary and Financial Audit Reports.
- Cristina Almazán pointed out the need of having a short table summarizing the financial audit available for the members.
- Malick Gaye requested information on the costs of the last general assembly and on the financial needs of the General Assembly, which are of higher-priority than financial decentralization. He also stressed the need of having French simultaneous translation.
- German Lomtev requested information on the costs of the audit, proposed himself for travelling with the General Secretary in order to raise funds and requested more HIC information in Russian language.
- Alejandro Suárez proposed to approve the reports.

#### *Responses of the Treasurer*

- The audit's costs were approximately 4000€, but normally they should be lower, approximately 2000€.
- No exact figure for costs of the World Social Forum because funds are coming from different sources, but it could be said that to have significant representation in the WSF would cost about 40000€.

**Decision 2** (26 votes): Approval of the Progress Report of the General Secretariat and of the Financial Audit Report.

### **7. Strategy for consolidating HIC activities and visibility in the different Regions.**

*a. Presentation of Ted Añana. Focal Point in Asia (Annex 5).*

Asian Coalition for Housing Rights started working in Seoul with the big forced evictions during the Olympics Games, but it has moved itself to other solutions and long term approaches, mainly preventive activities related with people's savings and credits. Other projects include for example the OPP Orange Pilot Project in Pakistan. The focus of the Asian Coalition is on people's processes, on people producing houses for themselves.

Regarding SPH is a proposal that can consolidate HIC activities and HIC visibility in Asia. Four activities for the future: 1. Secure tenure campaign; 2. Engagement with multilateral and bilateral institutions, namely World Bank, Asian Development Bank, etc.; 3. Study of people's processes of housing production in 5 cities; and 4. Asian People Assembly of House Producers of Rural and Urban Areas.

*b. Presentation of Korotimy Thera. Francophone Africa Representative (Annex 6).*

New elections are going to take place in Anglophone Africa, organized by the Focal Point. Proposed HIC consolidation activities of the Committee of Environmental Development Network for Africa as a whole were first approved in Johannesburg and submitted to the Board. On SPH there are also ongoing projects and national consultations.

A working group was formed to consolidate network among all the African HIC structures in order to develop new ideas and discuss ongoing projects. New websites are going to be produce in order to exchange information more easily.

*c. Presentation of Cesare Ottolini. Europe (Annex 7)*

Europe meeting took place with very few members. Processes are going to be managed autonomously by the European colleges of the Coalition until the European meeting at the European Social Forum, where it will be decided upon changes in the Focal Point management strategy. There is a proposal of investing the coalition's energies in the organization of a European Urban Forum. New avenues to fight for housing rights are being sought at the global level.

*Comments of the Assembly*

- Georgina Sandoval asked why no mentions were made of the fact that CO represents the IAI and requested clarifications about the links between HIC and IAI, in order to understand what CO under new avenues.
- German Lomtev informed that many mass forced evictions will take place in Russia during the next years and requested to include this situation as a high-priority strategic focus of HIC activities, at least for the European HIC level.

*Responses of Cesare Ottolini*

- Cesare Ottolini explained that he was elected by an overwhelming majority as a Board Member in 2002. At the same time, the UI became the HIC focal point for Europe, what was confirmed in the European Social Forum in Florence. In the HIC Board was said there was an incompatibility of these roles and he was asked to resign, a decision that he is willing to take. FEANTSA for example is an organization that could follow-up with the tasks of the focal point.
- AIA does not compete with HIC, for it simply gathers social movements, it is a network of organization not a platform or an umbrella. AIA is not a professional organization but an association of basis movements. AIA is prepared to work and collaborate with HIC.

*d. Presentation of Michael Kane. North America Report (Annex 8)*

HIC is an opportunity to find new allies in Russia, Europe and the rest of the world to fight for social housing and against forced evictions. In USA we are mainly fighting to save the subsidies for the housing sector from drastic budget cuts made by the Bush administration. Many organizations are protesting against this situation, but with very limited resources. There are also contacts with the

Tenants Unions of the UK and France. Contacts with Canadian members are just starting and there is the proposal to strength in the next year the Coalition in North America.

*e. Presentation of Lorena Zárate. Latin America Report (Annex 9)*

Evictions are a reality in Latin America, but maybe not as central as in Asia. Perhaps the most serious problem in the region is the lack of resources for housing and especially to support social production of housing. States don't have funds, and when they have funds these are invested in private housing projects. This is a strategic central point for HIC that can give visibility to HIC activities. Also it is proposed to produce papers on how to monitor the right to housing in Latin America. Parallel ongoing reports in some Latin American countries on the situation of housing rights will provide rich information of the regional situation. An international project on prevention of disasters in high-risk areas linking Latin America and Asia is currently taking place. Communication is also being improved, etc.

\* Thematic networks reports were left pending in order to have enough time for an open debate.

## **8. Plan of Action 2004 - 2005**

Enrique Ortiz, President.

- In December 2004 all HIC structures should submit to the General Secretary their respective Action's Plan for 2005. These plans are central to coordinate HIC activities at the global level and the only mean to become a strong coalition that effectively influence policy making processes. These plans are important also to define the main global topics: tenancy, homelessness, social production of habitat, marginalization, housing policy, privatization, etc.
- HIC Action Plan should seek to connect HIC with different forums, to which HIC should belong. Nevertheless HIC should put forward its own activities and have concrete outputs in order to confront effectively neo-liberal policies, to consolidate the human right approach and to promote social production, people's processes.
- Process of defining this long term strategy is not a task of the General Secretary or of some Board Members, but a process that must include all HIC members.

## **9. Other business**

- Ma Graças Xavier informed about recent attacks against homeless people (8 persons killed, 9 injured and some women raped) in Sao Paulo, Brazil, added that to date responsible people have not been found and observed that the city government is doing very little in these cases.  
**Decision 3** (unanimous): A HIC statement will be prepared requesting the government of Sao Paulo to investigate seriously about these killings and attacks in Sao Paulo.
- Pedro Fernandez proposed to create a solidarity fund in order to ensure the participation of Third World organizations in HIC General Assemblies, wherever they may be held.
- Evaniza Rodriguez considers the introduction of the Charter on the Right to the City in the WUF as an achievement of HIC.
- German Lomtev proposed to submit his proposals for the Plan of Action directly to the Board and to take apart small funds in order to organize a collective excursion around Barcelona.
- Anelise Melendez stressed the importance of participating in an Assembly in order to gain transparency for all.
- Guillermo Rodriguez from Mexico, popular leader, propose to incorporate two strategic points into the HIC long term strategy: 1. the consolidation of intensive cities, fighting against the growth of the urban space all around the world, and 2. the question of the open city vs. the closed city, and to fight for open cities.

- Victor Fernandez stressed the importance of the concepts that define strategies. Human right to housing is of course central for HIC strategy, but other human rights –health, education, etc.- cannot be excluded of HIC approach, because they require each other.
- Knut Unger pointed out that there is still a serious lack of deep reflection on the long term strategy of the Coalition, and that even though some steps in this direction were done, for example in the meeting with the UN Special Rapporteur on Social Housing, it is necessary to reflect on the fact that the Coalition is losing power. HIC needs a global project to identify the priorities and the weaknesses of the Coalition.

#### **10. Date and place of the next General Assembly**

Next General Assembly will take place in January 2005 at the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre. Location and date of the next Board Meeting is still not decided, parallel to which there could be another General Assembly.

#### **11. Closure (02:00 PM)**