



# HIC General Assembly Minutes of the Meeting in Cairo, May 2009

Cataract Hotel, Giza, Cairo, Egypt, May 13th, from 10:00 am to 06:00 pm

## Introduction

HIC 2009 General Assembly was held in different moments and places, in the decentralized perspective that was decided in Barcelona 2008 to facilitate a broader participation of the HIC members. The first meeting took place in Belem, Brazil in January during the World Social Forum; see the minutes [here](#). The second part was a two-day meeting at HICairo global event, held in Giza from 10 to 16 May. One day was part of the HIC-HLRN Land Forum and was focused on an international strategy on land rights; see the report [here](#). The third part, here reported, covered the institutional issues required by HIC Constitution.

## 1. Revision of the Quorum

There were 29 people present at this General Assembly meeting, coming from 19 countries, from which 8 from Africa. Of these 29, 16 had voting rights (see the list [here](#)) and represented all HIC regional and thematic structures.

## 2. Welcome

The President, Davinder Lamba, and Vice-President, Anelise Melendez, welcomed members and participants to the General Assembly and explained the nature of this decentralized General Assembly meetings. The Vice-President mentioned that the topics and issues discussed in Belem will be presented during this meeting. The president spoke about how the General Assembly is a space to focus on HIC inner capacities and how they can be strengthened.

## 3. Revision and Approval of the Agenda

The Agenda was presented and several proposals and changes were made.

**Decision 1:** (*consensus*) The Agenda is approved with the following amendments:

*Point 7:* Accounting and auditing may only be approved for the GS because other reports were not distributed.

*Point 8:* Topic of *Women and the Right to Housing* is placed as a first point in the *Review of the HIC Global Strategy* instead and title is changed to *Women and the Right to Land and Housing*.

## 4. Approval of the Minutes of the Previous GA Meeting (Barcelona 2008)

The minutes of the previous General Assembly meetings have been disseminated through HICairo blog. The floor is open for comments.

**Decision 2:** Barcelona minutes are approved with 9 votes in favour (corresponding to the members present in Barcelona) and 6 abstentions.

A summary of the topics discussed during the decentralized GA meeting in Belem was presented by the Vice-President; for further information, see Annex 1.

## 5. Regional and Thematic Reports

The purpose is to review the 2008 regional and thematic network activities reports. A motion is made to vote on whether or not HLRN and MENA should present their reports since these were submitted past the deadline.

**Decision 3:** 10 votes in favor of HLRN and MENA presenting their reports.

- **HIC Francophone Africa**

2008 activities and topics presented by Korotimi Thera, Khady Diagne, and Joseph Fumtim. These include:

- The celebration of World Habitat Day in Mali, Senegal Cameroon, Congo, and Burkina Faso.
- Projects and activities focusing on rain water collection, prevention of desertification, educational workshops on hygiene and sanitation, campaign against forced evictions including the dissemination of films and articles on this topic in the media.
- Issue of the evicted population in Yaoundé, Cameroon.

- **HIC Anglophone Africa**

Presentation by Deborah Gathu. The primary focus in 2008 was the HIC Africa Project, a partnership between HIC, ACCD, and Rooftops Canada, and coordinated by the Mazingira Institute. A summary of the three workshops was given (Mali, Ethiopia, and Burkina Faso workshops) and other focus areas were discussed: communication and networking; HIC membership recruitment; women and access to land; housing and HIV/AIDS; and access to water and sanitation. Outcomes of the HIC Africa Project are summarized in the SINA newsletters available on the Mazingira website.

- **HIC Latin America and the Caribbean**

Presentation by Lorena Zarate. The main thematic areas were presented: the right to housing, land, water, and the city; the social production of habitat; the impact of megaprojects; and climate change prevention and mitigation. The strategic lines of work were as follows: influencing public policy on housing; strengthening social processes and actors; developing tools; communication and alliance building.

- **HIC Asia**

Presentation by Rabial Mallick. Although there is no HIC-Asia focal point, there are many active HIC members throughout the region, many which work alongside HIC member LOCOA (Leaders and Organizers of Community Organization in Asia). Eviction is an issue that HIC members are working on in Bangladesh, the Philippines, Cambodia, Indonesia, and India. There is a need to increase coordination between HIC members throughout Asia, as well as within individual countries.

- **HIC North America**

Presentation by Nick Volk. Miloon Kothari's (UN-SRAH) mission to Canada was used for advocacy and to pressure provincial and municipal governments. Priority concerns are of finding new ways to communicate throughout the region and of dues collection. Some advancements were made through US members and Rooftops Canada's work in housing microfinance in Africa.

- **HIC Europe**

Presentation by Katherine Coit. HIC members events in Europe include: the G8 meeting in Marseilles where members met with government representatives to make housing demands; Droit au Logement (DAL) demonstrations in Paris; London demonstrations for the G20 meetings; and World Habitat Day activities. There is a growing interest by European HIC members to link issues of housing and climate change.

- **HIC HSEN**

Presentation by Khady Diagne. Activities and events related to climate change and housing were presented: international climate change meeting in Tanzania; discussions at WUF IV on climate change and how to reduce anthropogenic causes; local initiatives on the prevention and mitigation of natural disasters; and the 5<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum in Istanbul in March 2008. There is a need to strengthen exchanges across regions and have common strategies on issues of climate change and housing and it is important to integrate climate change into all topics related to housing and land rights. A primary focus of Raquel Rolnik, UN Special Rapporteur on adequate housing, is on climate change and housing and she would like to coordinate efforts with HIC. A questionnaire was disseminated during the GA to gather information on which HIC members are involved in this line of work.

- **HIC WAS**

No presentation was made by a HIC-WAS representative.

- **HIC HLRN**

Presentations by Joseph Schechla, Angie Balata, and Shivani Chaudhry. Tools and methodologies are being developed for member use such as: a tool to measure the progress of the MDGs; and a guideline on how to use budget analysis from a housing rights perspective. There is a low response rate to Urgent Action Appeals and the Durban Review Process from HIC members. The work HLRN SARP conducted in 2008 includes: the production of a handbook on development-based evictions and displacement translated into 5 Indian languages; organization of an urban rights forum for the homeless; and a post-tsunami rehabilitation workshop. There is a need to improve communication between members in India and the UN-SRAH.

- **HIC MENA**

Presentation by Rabie Wabah. Projects in 2008 include: the production of the Arabic version of the book *Reclaiming Public Water*; and the Africa Human Rights Spaces project. A report on the fact finding mission of the unrecognized villages of the Naqab is being produced. There is a need for HIC to have a stronger position on racism and xenophobia, as well as a need to have a simplified version of the Durban Review questionnaire.

- **HIC President**

The HIC President, Davinder Lamba, reported on the activities and events he attended in 2008 internationally –meetings and conferences in Canada, China, Ethiopia, France, Monaco, Switzerland, Sweden, USA– and in Kenya.

## **6. General Secretariat's report**

The GS has undertaken many organizational activities in the last year including working on different tools to manage membership, organizing HIC's General Assemblies in Barcelona and Belem, and participation in the WSF's international council. The GS has also supported regional articulation, having participated in activities in Nigeria and Mali and in the ACCD project in Africa. In Latin America, the GS has supported housing rights and policies in Bolivia and other academic activities in Argentina. A large task undertaken by the GS in the last year was changing HIC website platform from Windows to Linux to improve the presentation of documents and facilitate greater exchanges. A new updated HIC website was launched during the GA and includes the HICademy tool. Finally, the GS continually works with local social movements and organizations in Chile.

## 7. Accounting and audit

### • HIC GS

HIC Treasurer, Joseph Schechla, presented to the Assembly two documents:

- The audit report of the Misereor project with the GS for 2008, expressed in Chilean pesos, detailing incomes and expenses corresponding to 100,000 euros. These resources cover the normal operation of the General Secretariat in Santiago. See [here](#)
- The audit report of other resources managed by HIC-GS during 2008, such as membership fees, grants and incomes from consultancy work. The incomes were USD 40,074.14; the expenses USD 24,708.51. The difference is to cover part of the activities in Belem and in Cairo. See [here](#)

### • HIC AL

A HIC AL report was not reviewed during the GA but is available to HIC members and friends that request it. The GS will have a copy of this report and it will be put into the consolidated Annual Report.

### • HIC HLRN

HRLN income totalled 395,000 USD in 2008 for their global and regional programs, with contributions from various funding organizations, networks and donors. HLRN had a small surplus at the end of 2008, having spent 366,000 USD from this income.

**Decision 4:** A motion was called to approve only the audit of the GS since it was the only report distributed. 12 votes approved the audit and there was 4 vote of abstention.

## 8. Review of HIC global strategy

### • Women and housing & land rights - Presentation by Shivani Bhardwaj

The Women and Shelter Network (WAS) needs to be strengthened. There is a lot of positive support for this to happen, considering the recommendations made at the 2008 Barcelona Seminar which provided a normative base on women, housing and land rights. The Coalition has to find a way to integrate women's representation and equal distribution of resources within HIC structures, and a proposal could be the creation of a Charter of Equality. It is very important to discuss how to revive the WAS network, to improve fundraising and organization issues.

#### Discussion

Conversations revolved around the need to strengthen WAS, stressing:

- The communication and information gap within WAS and other HIC structures
- The need to establish a global WAS coordination
- The importance of formalizing the structure to make it operative
- The commitment of WAS representatives to share information
- The importance for each HIC structure to detail how much they spend on women and gender issues each year

**Decisions:** (consensus):

- Creation of WAS Secretary (Shivani Bhardwaj) with support from HIC General Secretariat
- Institutionalization process of WAS: internal democracy, creation of a two-year common program, representative of WAS within each HIC structure, reports of HIC WAS

### • Housing and Land Rights Day (HLRD), October 2009 - Presentation by Lorena Zárate

For the past two years, HLRD campaigns have been held in alliance with other international networks related to the World Social Forum, with the support of different virtual means, such as a specific web site or a section for the campaign themes, with a housing and land rights violations map, in collaboration with HLRN Violation Database (VDB).

#### Discussion

Conversations revolved around the organization of the next HLRD, stressing:

- The need for all HIC members to participate in expanding the VDB
- HIC critiquing role of the UN's HLRD slogan

- The importance of the financial crisis in the new HLRD slogan
- The need to create a new map depicting good practices
- The importance to discuss urban issues and land themes
- To highlight gender equality through urban planning and resources for women
- To clarify the relationship between HIC and the UN

**Decisions** (consensus): The slogan for the HLRD Campaign 2009 has to be adopted via electronic means during June. The campaign will be based on specific cases –one per region, within important issues, evictions, financial crisis, climate changes, women and housing, right to the city.

- **Right to the City (R2C) towards World Urban Forum** - Presentation by Ana Sugranyes  
HIC has been working on the Right to the City since 1992, and the World Charter for the R2C emerged in 2005. The R2C is a political strategy, an opportunity for change to improve living conditions in the city. HIC next opportunity to advocate for the implementation of the R2C will be at the WUF V to be held in Rio de Janeiro, from 22 to 26 March 2010. In Brazil there is a possibility to work together with many different organizations and with the UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing, Raquel Rolnik. The National Forum of Urban Reform in Brazil will collaborate with the government to prepare official documents for WUF. This is an opportunity to amplify the concept of the R2C into a broad approach not only focused on Latin American experiences.

#### **Discussion**

Conversations revolved around the nature of WUF V, stressing:

- The importance to focus on the equal right of women, men, and children to the city: with particular attention on the most marginalized groups
- The positive aspects that we have achieved towards the R2C
- The opportunity to bring social movements from other continents to WUF V

**Decisions** (consensus):

- To make a global publication on R2C experiences worldwide to disseminate via electronic means previous WUF V
- To coordinate these efforts at an international level, to bring the debate of the R2C to other continents and to join these efforts at WUF V

- **Human Settlements and Climate Change** - Presentation by Khady Diagne and David Quezada  
Human Settlements and climate change are wide-ranging issues encompassing all regions during many international events (for example, the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg 2002). However there is still a need to have a more coordinated work between all the regions. The strategy adopted would be to identify the nature of the relationship between all partners, to lead advocacy actions, and to exchange experiences between the different regions. The term "Human Settlements and Climate Change" is problematic because it is very broad and a better term could be "Climate Change, Awareness and Adaptability". Many social movements are working in this theme, for example environmentally-displaced people in Latin America, and the Climate Change Tribunal in Bolivia which demands that the funds provided for climate change serve the most marginalized people.

#### **Discussion**

Conversations revolved around responding to climate changes, stressing:

- The interest to create a map tracking where evictions and displacements due to climate change are occurring
- The importance to participate in the UN Climate Change Conference, Copenhagen, December 2009
- The development of a framework to train HIC members on habitat and climate change, without marginalizing others important issues
- HIC contribution to the human rights approach related to environmental refugees
- Work on the gender approach to environmental issues

**Decisions** (consensus):

- Creation of a working group with Khady Diagne, David Quezada and Charlotte Mathivet (HIC GS)
- to organize a meeting with the Golden Island community from the Land Forum field visit, and provide them with a follow-up (for example, an Urgent Action Appeal)

## **9. Closure**

The GA came to a close at 6pm.

*HIC-GS/CM/SB/AS/29May2009*