



HIC General Assembly

Minutes of the Meeting in Rio, March 2010

Casa Emaús do Mosteiro de São Bento, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil,
March 25th, from 8am to 2pm

1. Welcome

HIC President, Davinder Lamba, and Vice-President, Anelise Melendez, welcomed members and participants to the General Assembly and explained the context of this GA during the World Urban Forum (WUF 5) and the Urban Social Forum. It is not by accident that this year, WUF has for topic the Right to the City: the government of Brazil proposed this issue to UN-Habitat, because of the pressure of the National Forum of Urban Reform (FNUR) a broad Brazilian platform of social movements and organizations, from which many are HIC members: it has been a struggle for many years; HIC has been supporting the process for the past two decades.

2. Revision of the Quorum

There were 67 people present at this General Assembly meeting, coming from 25 countries. Of these 67, 41 had voting rights and represented all HIC regional and thematic structures.

3. Approval of the Minutes of the Previous GA Meetings (Belem and Cairo 2009)

HIC President explained the two-part HIC meetings in 2009, the first held in January 2009 in Belem, Brazil, and the second part in May 2009, in Cairo, Egypt.

4. Revision and Approval of the Agenda

The Agenda was presented and approved.

5. Regional and Thematic Reports

The purpose is to review the 2009 regional and thematic networks reports of activities.

- **HIC Anglophone Africa**

Presentation by Abdul Hamid Slatch. of the Young Muslims Association hosted an event based on HIV/AIDS and the poor in slums areas. There have been sub-regional workshops, exchanging of experiences on thematic and regional issues in August 2009. The main challenges are building members' capacities through training.

- **HIC Francophone Africa**

Presentation by Khady Diagne, Enda-RUP. In 2009, there were many projects developed in the region. In July 2009, a meeting of Francophone Africa on the strategies of the right to water was held in Dakar, as well as workshops on HIV/AIDS on the subject of housing rights from the disease perspective. Urgent actions on advocacy have grown in Cameroon. The advocacy training is very interesting for members of HIC to struggle against housing rights violations.

- **HIC Asia**

Presentation by Abu Rayhan Al-Beeroonee, of Shelter the Poor. In Tokyo, there is a park that is going to be leased by Nike, so there is an international campaign against it and we need HIC members to sign the campaign. There were a lot of activities with some governments in the region.

- **HIC Latin America and the Caribbean**

Presentation by Felix Yanes, of CMMLK. HIC in the Region is working on strengthening the work on the right to the city, climate change, advocacy, public policy advocacy, media presence, and dissemination of documents. We have a large presence in workshops and seminars in the region, for example in December 2009 in Habana with the workshop on Communication Strategy and Articulation of Organizations and Movements for the Right to Land, Housing and the City in America.

The challenges are: to expand the membership to strengthen the coalition by developing better internal communication tools; to deepen the concept of social production of habitat; to make visible progress in politics, in a joint action with HIC members. The most important debates are: the huge dispute from the Chilean model of housing; Brazil is a huge step forward with respect to the right to the city but it is still a problem to implement it; the importance of the cooperatives movement in Uruguay; and the great advances in Bolivia in the social production level of participation.

- **HIC North America**

Presentation by Nick Volk. National Association of Housing and the National Canadian Housing Association are the major organizations in the region, which make valuable contributions to HIC. In the municipal level in Toronto we wrote a declaration on the right to the city and on housing as a human right. We also are participants in international HIC campaign, such as an appeal against forced evictions. We are working on increasing participation.

- **HIC MENA**

Presentation by Joe Schechla. The principal issue in our network is land. In our region we have a lot of countries with issues of evictions, the most famous one is Palestine but there is also Syria. HIC work in Palestine is not to disseminate the Palestinian fight because it's very well known: it is to discuss the conflict from a political point of view. We had to show how the military occupation consistently contributes to housing rights violations. Among our activities in 2009: we organized a land forum in Cairo corresponding with HIC meetings; we worked on the guidelines of the FAO; we participated in the GLTN from the thematic structure with a working group on Islamic culture on land; and we have a new member based in Darfur which is very important because the issue of land hasn't been raised there.

- **HIC Europe**

Presentation by Katherine Coit, UDE. In 2007, HIC friends and former members accomplished the Opposable Right to Housing law in France. It aims at addressing the courts when people don't have access to a house. But the result since then is that the government doesn't carry out the law and they are doing everything to avoid it.

Ada Colau, Observatori DESC: In Spain we are trying to influence a real change of paradigm, through advocacy and joint work in Catalonia but also with Italy. We have increased our work with HIC and we want to increase our work with Europe, because until now there were many links with the problem of language so there are more contacts with Latin America. We are willing to work on having more members of HIC in Europe.

- **HIC WAH**

Presentation by Shivani Bhardwaj, of Sathi all for Partnership (SAFP): Last year in Cairo we began the renewal of HIC WAH. In the UN-Habitat system, there has been a four year process of distinguishing ourselves from Huairou Commission. We have to make clear what our organization is doing in term of gender work.

Graça Xavier, of UMPSP: There has been a lot of work in the Safe City Campaign with a lot of links between the regions.

- **HIC HLRN**

Presentation by Joseph Schechla. The network works as a global group and members asked us to make an urgent action tool against evictions. We had a very good experience with members from Cameroon who use the tool very well. Since WUF 3, we have the violations data base and the global mapping for HLRD. But members don't use it and nobody has entered a case. We collected a lot of cases of evictions in different countries from the media, and then we sent it back to our members. But we haven't gotten any feedback. In SARP, we have been working on the report on forced evictions by the Special Rapporteur. We are working on a gendered tool on the Violation Data Base (VDB). The problem is that we have to make it simple and focus on some violations. The omission of women's rights violations, like inheritance rights, is due to the complexity of gathering the information. The VDB isn't only gendered and there are

references to immigrants as well. We didn't include HIV/AIDS because of the lack of debates and because nobody has entered any cases in the VDB.

- **HIC HSEN**

Presentation by Khady Diagne. In 2009, HSEN has focused its work on training for trainers, advocacy, training on the right to water and sanitation with ANEW, and definition of the defense mechanisms in Paris. The election process has already begun in Yaoundé with some HIC members. We tried to see how we can attract new members.

- **HIC GS**

During 2009, the main challenge for the GS was to coordinate the forces towards Rio meetings. The Urban Social Forum (USF) is the most obvious result of what work has been achieved during a year with different networks (IAI, FNURU, COHRE). We wanted UN-Habitat to try to understand what the right to the city is, presenting FNURU for the Habitat Scroll of Honour Award 2009, but without any success. Then we attempted to have a space for civil society within the WUF 5, but we were unsuccessful. However, the USF is a strong step forward from what we've been doing in recent years. Another challenge in the same direction is the book *Cities for All* which reflects the diversity of partners and allies of the right to the city. We have made improvements for the membership management. We have accompanied local processes, and finally after 20 years, the Chilean organizations have joined SELVIP. A major theme in 2010 will be the HIC elections: it is a challenge of having new people as they may be unprepared in the Board.

6. Accounting and audit

- **HIC GS**

HIC Treasurer, Joseph Schechla, presented the audit report to the Assembly, related to 2 main accounting spheres:

- The Misereor programme (2008-2010) supporting the GS operational costs, expressed in Chilean pesos, detailing the 2009 incomes and expenses corresponding to 100,000 Euros, one third of the available resources for 3 years.
- Other resources managed by HIC-GS during 2009, such as membership fees, grants and income from consultancy work. From July 2008 to December 2009, the incomes were USD 50,607; the expenses USD 39,796. The balance was foreseen for the present activities of HIC at WUF5 and USF.

- **The consolidated financial statement HIC 2009**

For the statement 2009, integrating financial balances of HIC-Africa (ACCD project), HIC-AL, HIC-MENA, HIC-HLRN and SARP, and HIC-GS, at the moment just the audits related to the accounting of A HIC-AL and HIC-GS are available. The statement will be presented in HIC Annual Report 2009 by July.

Decision: Vote on all the reports: Approval with 28 votes; and 9 abstentions.

7. Review of HIC global strategy

- **Right to the City**

Presentation by Lorena Zárate, staff of HIC-AL: HIC has been a key actor in the construction process of the right to the city, expanding the view from Latin America to other regions of the world, promoting the achievement of specific events, discussing and formulating joint strategies among its members and with other actors. The UN has been promoting the process of the right to the city for some time and we have to recognize that WUF 5 has been an important step, but at the same time, we have to stay active and alert. From now on, it will undoubtedly be "fashionable" talking about the "right to the city". We have to be careful about this and deepen the issues we have defined from organizations and networks such as: full exercise of citizenship, social function of land, democratic production of the city, sustainable management of environmental resources, and equitable enjoyment of the city. To counteract any distortions of this issue, stronger action is required to affirm and deepen the contents of the right to the city towards a paradigm shift, as a proposal for cultural change. We propose the (re)creation of a specific HIC working group which would work in defining public policy advocacy, through articulation between the different networks, the documentation of rights violations with the recommendations of the Rapporteurs, the dissemination of the best tools for monitoring, and collective action and policy implementation of the right to the city. For this, we stress the importance of more exchanges between the regions.

- **Housing and Land Rights**

Presentation by Angie Balata, staff of HIC-HLRN: During 2009, we have observed the following concerns: an increase in violations arising, specifically, from privatization and environmentally-related disasters (the effects of Katrina and the Asian Tsunami are still being felt, but now with Haiti and Chile there is more violations of housing and land rights); a deeper work within HIC HLRN on the increased privatization of public space, the lack of access for minority groups to these spaces, and the spatial segregation; the challenge to make an assessment of the precious tools developed by HLRN to make them more viable and responsive to members.

Presentation by Silvia Emanuelli, staff of HIC-AL: It is important to foster the necessary link between the countryside and the city in the different topics covered by the network as: megaprojects and violations of the rights to land and housing (as in the case of the fight against Parota Dam, Mexico), the human right to water with the work made in several meetings to enhance and provide answers to local, national and even regional issues, development of publications, participation in forums and the creation of a project on strategic litigation over water rights ; monocultures and violations of housing and land rights and its impact on evictions, with a publication and a report on the subject.

HIC-AL and HLRN coordinated to lead the members the following questions:

1. Are our tools responding to member needs? Do they need to be improved and, if so, how?
2. Are we, as HIC, upholding our commitment to housing and land rights in terms of taking up all the necessary issue relevant to our members and to changing realities?
3. Are our current approaches to current issues relevant for members?

- **Gender Mainstreaming**

Presentation by Bola Fajemirokun, from DIN: This was essentially a feedback to the GA on the work of the committee set up by the HIC Board at its Rio meeting. There is a recognition that although HIC has taken steps to address gender issues, primarily, through the establishment of WAS/WAHN and the requirement for a gender alternate for board representatives, there is now a need to have a coherent and consistently applied gender mainstreaming strategy right across all HIC networks and thematic structures.

However, implementation will need to be phased. Key recommendations include gender audits, gender impact assessments of HIC's activities and resource allocation, training workshops as well as the specific allocation of resources (programme/project funds, staff & volunteers) for the promotion of gender work. It is crucial that the HIC Annual Report also includes a Gender Report. The clear understanding must be that the term "gender" does not mean women only. The Gender Committee members are, namely, Shelley Buckingham, Joseph Schechla, Shivani Bhardwaj, Issa Samander, Graça Xavier and Bola Fajemirokun. Presentation by Graça Xavier, from UMPSP: HIC first held a debate on gender issues within its structure. With the process of gender mainstreaming in the structures of HIC, raised problems and challenges that can overcome the gender dimension. We need to give visibility to gender and equity in our publications; to invest in gender training in HIC for women and men in order to add this debate on the struggles' agenda; to hold a HIC seminar on gender in Cuba late November or early December 2010 - with representative men and women, whose objective is training and planning in the short, medium and long term; to summarize the successful experiences of organizations in relation to campaigns and affirmative public policy proposals for women (as in Brazil, all housing units built by the government grant tenure to the name of the woman).

- **Campaigns**

Presentation by Michael Kane, from NAHT: HIC has called for International Housing and Land Rights Days of Action each year since 2003, which are meant to be "oppositional" activities on or around UN World Habitat Day in October. For the past few years, HIC's call has been coordinated with the IAI and other partners under the banner, Act Together-Housing for All.

The floor was opened to reports on HIC-related actions last year, and proposals for themes for 2010. Within the US, NAHT organized an action with the National Coalition for the Homeless, Poor Peoples Economic Human Rights Campaign, and the HIC GS protesting the US failure to ratify the ICESCR Treaty outside the official World Habitat Day event cosponsored with US Housing Secretary Donovan last October. NAHT also participated with other allies in Raquel Rolnik's US tour, and is spearheading a campaign for ICESCR ratification which will generate local actions into next year in the US.

In Peru, HIC members have launched a Right to Property campaign opposing mega projects with the IAI's Zero Evictions campaign this year, an election year in Peru. The campaign has gathered 60,000 signatures for a Constitutional amendment on the Right to Housing, and is fighting for a national law to protect people from evictions caused by urban renewal. In Brazil, UNIAO is campaigning for a national

housing system and more resources for housing. Katherine Coit proposed a HIC sponsored contest, with funds raised for awards for “best practice” campaigns to save or improve habitat/environment. As a coordinator for IAI’s Zero Evictions campaign, Pedro Franco called for united networks for Zero Evictions at the global and regional levels. Others called for follow up by the UN Advisory Group on Forced Evictions reports on New Orleans, UK Travelers, and other areas.

Several participants vowed to continue these and other campaigns, utilizing International Housing and Land Rights Days in October 2010 in coordination with IAI and other networks in the Act Together—Housing for All collaboration.

- **Social Production of Habitat**

Presentation by Anelise Melendez, HIC Vice President: The debate on the social production of habitat assesses the contributions of people to find a place to live. This effort requires decades of work. What does it mean to build a home in a progressive way without any input of external support of the community? With a home, people will have access to education, health etc. Policies need to consider the social production of housing in order to understand and recognize housing with its use value instead of its exchange value. The framework of social production forces us to consider the alternative economy, to respect the cultures to build housing and recognizes the capabilities of the people. People’s actions should be in synergy in order to empower them. We must have an accurate picture of the city, how people live, build their home and occupy the land.

Roció Lombera, from COPEVI: In Mexico, we have signed an agreement on production and management of social production of habitat. An advisory board will be formed with members from academia and NGOs to carry out this process. The city government will provide land, because it is impossible to compete with the market.

Pedro Franco, from the IAI: in 2000 the World Assembly of Inhabitants materialized the social production’s proposal and the Charter of Inhabitants has been created. Now we are organizing the Assembly of the Inhabitants in January 2011 within the WSF in Dakar and IAI invites HIC to participate.

9. Closure

Next HIC General Assembly meeting will be held in Dakar, January 2011.
The GA came to a close at 2pm.

HIC-GS/CM/SB 06 April 2010