



The Madrid Declaration

Building together the World Assembly of Inhabitants!

Considering:

The drastic situation in the world's cities:

- The reigning neo-liberal globalization, based on exclusion and social inequality, is the reason for more and more infringements on the right to housing, leaving more than a billion people homeless, or living in disastrous conditions, threatened with eviction, discriminated against by war and victimized by catastrophe, because they are migrants, women, poor, or marginalized people such as the Dalits, the Roms, and the native peoples;
- The UN-Habitat predicts that by 2020, the number of people living under these conditions will have increased by 70%, or more than 1,7 billion worldwide, while urban policies continue to favor the interests of real estate property rather than the interests of the majority, and the governments of poor countries go on paying foreign debts as demanded by the World Bank and the IMF. Therefore, target n.7 of the Millennium Development Goals n. 11 established by the United Nations, which established the improvement of living conditions for 100 million people by 2020, will prove impossible and feckless.

That social maturity is now a reality and that the time has come to make heard the voice, the experience and the policy of the new inhabitants, organized at g-local level:

- Every day, new initiatives arise across the globe, born of the social organizations and the networks of inhabitants who are heroically resisting evictions, fighting privatization and the liberalization of the housing sector, squatting empty buildings and vacant lots, and together defending the right to housing;
- In the midst of these daily battles, various participatory alternatives are coming from the communities, the neighborhoods, the colonies, and the favelas, which foreshadow not one, but many models destined to become public policies, both urban and rural, and realistic alternatives for lasting human development;
- These popular and social experiences are proof of the extraordinary capability and maturity of the social urban movements, which are the modern political equivalent of the old "city builders", jointly taking part in resolving the various urban and rural dilemmas creatively and effectively;
- These movements are diverse in origin, culture, and geography, but share the principle of solidarity, marked by their strong social attachment and the common desire to build another possible world, affirming that other cities are possible.

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For these reasons we call for and support the organization of a World Assembly of Inhabitants for 2011.

We recognize its basis in the Charter of Principles of the WSF and the Charter of San Salvador, in the World Assembly of Inhabitants (Mexico, October 2000) and in the World Assembly of Citizens for a solidarity and Responsible World (Lille, October 2001), among others; we base this proposal on the Call to unite the urban social movements, supported by more than 350 organizations in over 40 countries on all continents.

We appeal to all organizations and networks of inhabitants, all cooperatives, tenants unions, community centers, native peoples and committees for the right to housing in all countries, to jointly organize this initiative on all levels (local, regional, national, and global) with the following goals in mind:

- To build a common area, both global and of solidarity, for the exchange of experiences, debate, evaluation, methodology and elaboration of proposals based on the recognition of diversity in culture and people, but also of complementarities and balances in respecting our rights, as an International Urban Movement, to organize ourselves in an autonomous manner, to build the "Urban Way" "Via Urbana", and to face different actors (local authorities, governments, transnational powers, professionals, NGOs);
- To promote mobilizing initiatives for joint and solidarity action, for the defense of our legal right to housing, to the city, and to habitat.

Let's coordinate our efforts against neo-liberal globalization in order to be able to build together another possible world and other possible cities!

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Towards the World Assembly of Inhabitants

- Call for signature on the local, federal, and international levels (Aug.-Sept. 2008)
- European Social Forum (Malmö, Sweden, Sept. 15th -21st 2008): establish the promotional unitary committee and the regional agenda
- World Zero Evictions Days (Oct. 2008): establish the promotional unitary committees and the territorial agendas
- Americas Social Forum (Guatemala, Oct. 7th-12th 2008): establish the promotional unitary committee and the regional agenda
- African Social Forum (Abuja, Nigeria, Nov. 2008???): establish the promotional unitary committee and the regional agenda
- World Social Forum (Belem, Brazil, Jan. 25th-30th 2009): fine-tune the terms of reference and establish the Global promotional unitary committee and the global agenda
- China-Europa Forum (China, 2009): establish the promotional unitary committee and the regional agenda
- Regional Social Forums and other initiatives: fine-tune preparing the grounds
- World Assembly of Inhabitants (January 2011, to be determined)

We suggest that you all use the www.habitants.org website and other web resources to communicate and systematize, widely and efficiently each step.

Madrid, June 2nd 2008

International Alliance of Inhabitants (IAI)

Delegates of popular organizations of different continents meeting in Madrid for the IAI Coordination Committee.