

**HABITAT**  
forum geneve 2012

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**World Habitat Day**

**2012 GENEVA HABITAT FORUM**

27 to 29 September 2012

**PRESS KIT**



**HABITAT** 2012  
forum geneve

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**2012 GENEVA HABITAT FORUM: CITIES BY AND FOR THEIR INHABITANTS**

**Taking place from 27 to 29 September 2012:**

**public conferences/debates**

**Tribunal on Evictions**

**Civil Society Initiatives for Sustainable Cities Award**

**workshops**

**Inhabitants' March (public event)**

**participative stand at the "Convergence between Geneva cooperatives"  
event**

**temporary exhibition**

...in order to promote the concept of “cities BY and FOR their inhabitants”, with the aim of gaining better understanding of the right to housing and the right to the city as key tools that work on a global level to reduce the impoverishment of deprived urban areas, and of strengthening the role of inhabitants and civil society actors in the sustainable development of our cities.



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## A. Issues at stake

At the beginning of the 20th century, urban population accounted for only 13% of the planet's inhabitants; today it accounts for more than half, and will probably rise to two thirds by 2050. We no longer talk about towns, but "polycentric urban systems" or "extended metropolitan areas", now that rural and urban borders are becoming increasingly blurred and cities are joining up. With the amount of land available for construction—a non-renewable resource—in constant decline, access to decent housing is more often a privilege than a right. How many people in the world live in sanitary conditions? These days, how many people can claim that they really have a choice about where they live? How many people can afford to own their own house? Or feel satisfied with the amount of rent they pay? Or feel safe from the risk of eviction?

A process of unplanned urban explosion has mainly affected southern countries, and has become synonymous with ever larger shanty towns, with over a billion people now living in slums. These people's basic needs, such as access to water, sanitation and a lasting habitat, are hardly ever met. In addition to growing global risks, the most vulnerable of these people are facing forced displacements, a phenomenon likely to step up according to all estimates, even the most moderate.

Although the theme of land planning is one of the biggest challenges facing human development, Swiss and international development aid has, until now, barely invested in this area, due particularly to the costs involved and the complexity of projects and necessary long-term strategies.

The Geneva Habitat Forum is based on the firm conviction that urban development "without inhabitants" accelerates inequalities and that civil society has a key role to play as an actor in cities and territories. The Forum is taking place over three themed days that aim to highlight initiatives from inhabitants and civil society, in both the South and the North, which encourage the sustainable development of our cities, and to denounce evictions. Organized as part of World Habitat Day and under the aegis of the UN human settlements' programme (UN Habitat), the 2012 Geneva Habitat Forum is bringing together civil society actors from Africa, Latin America and Asia actively involved in defending the right to housing along with local participants concerned with this issue. It thereby aims to encourage the sharing of experiences, ideas and information between inhabitants in southern and northern countries.

In collaboration with the *International Alliance of Inhabitants*, *PALC*, *Amnesty International* and *UN-Habitat*, urbaMonde sees the 2012 World Habitat Day as an opportunity to rethink cities: *by* and *for* their inhabitants.

## B. 2012 GENEVA HABITAT FORUM

### Background

In the wake of the World Social Forum and World Assembly of Inhabitants in Dakar in 2011, the idea of bring together actors from the North and South around the theme of habitat and land planning resulted in the ForuMMedia HABITAT participatif 2011, a first attempt at promoting the participative approach in terms both of habitat and media tools. It became clear that it was important to create an event that would improve cohesion between different initiatives in terms of urban cooperation and participative planning. Initiated by Franck NA and the International Alliance of Inhabitants as part of the World Zero Evictions Days - for the Right to Habitat, the Forum included the Tribunal for Evictions, presentations from ecodistricts and the Inhabitants' March. The event was relayed with over forty videos that are still available on [www.alachaine.ch](http://www.alachaine.ch) and [www.habitants.org](http://www.habitants.org).

In 2012, the various parties wishing to organize an international event joined forces with the aim of creating a benchmark Forum, including the contribution of urbaMonde, the event organizer.

### Context: habitat as a central concern

As autumn arrives, housing is a theme that is receiving close attention in French-speaking Switzerland. In September, the City of Geneva is launching its "Housing Emergency" programme. In parallel, the first ever Geneva Real Estate Exhibition will be held on the weekend of 27 and 30 September, attended by most of the regional property market actors. On Monday 1 October at EPFL (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne), the Société Suisse des Ingénieurs et Architectes is organizing the "Forum for French-speaking Swiss Cities: which public strategies for promoting architectural and urban planning quality?" The Groupement des coopératives d'habitation genevoises (GCHG) is also organising the Housing Cooperatives' Day on 29 September 2012 as part of the international cooperatives year declared by the United Nations.

### Habitat Forum goal

Over and above raising local awareness of the challenges facing solidarity-based urban development and exchanging ideas and information with citizens from all over the world, the project is seeking to promote the concept of "cities BY and FOR their inhabitants", with the aim of gaining better understanding of the right to housing and the right to the city as key tools that work on a global level to reduce the impoverishment of deprived urban areas, and of strengthening the role of inhabitants and civil society actors in the sustainable development of our cities.

## Target audience

The Forum targets inhabitants in the greater Geneva area, international inhabitants' networks, development NGOs and international cooperation organizations, student and academic milieus, lawyers, urban planners, architects, tenant associations, neighbourhood associations, cooperatives, etc.

## C. Programme

| <b>During the forum</b>           | Temporary exhibition  | Maison des associations    |
|-----------------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| <b>Thursday 27 September 2012</b> |   |                            |
| 6:30 to 8:00 pm                   | Conference - opening round table: "Cities by and for their inhabitants"                                       | Uni Mail MS160             |
| <b>Friday 28 September 2012</b>   |   |                            |
| 9:00 am to 12:00 pm               | Tribunal on Evictions   | Maison des associations    |
| 2:00 to 5:00 pm                   | Civil society initiatives for sustainable cities  | Maison des associations    |
| 5:30 to 7:00 pm                   | Workshops on initiatives, the Tribunal on Evictions and the Dharavi case                                      | Maison des associations    |
| 8:30 to 11:00 pm                  | "Dharavi: Slum for Sale" film and debate evening  | Maison des associations    |
| <b>Saturday 29 September 2012</b> |   |                            |
| 10:00 am to 1:00 pm               | Inhabitants' March  | Pâquis - Place des Nations |
| 12:00 to 1:00 pm                  | Reading of the Tribunal on Evictions recommendations at the Place des Nations, prize giving and Forum closure | Place des Nations          |
| 1:00 to 6:00 pm                   | Participatory stand at the "Cooperative convergences" event   | Cité Vieusseux             |

## Opening conference: “Cities by and for their inhabitants”

*“Thus, the cities of the future, rather than being made out of glass and steel as envisioned by earlier generations of urbanists, are instead largely constructed out of crude brick, straw, recycled plastic, cement blocks, and scrap wood.”* Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums*

At the beginning of the 20th century, urban population accounted for only 13% of the planet’s inhabitants; today it accounts for more than half, and will probably rise to two thirds by 2050. With the amount of land available for construction—a non-renewable resource—in constant decline, access to decent housing is more often a privilege than a right.

How many people in the world live in sanitary conditions? These days, how many people can claim that they really have a choice about where they live? How many people can afford to own their own house? Or feel satisfied with the amount of rent they pay? Or feel safe from the risk of eviction?

### Public conference:

Round table with:

- Benedito Barbosa (Central Movimentos Populares, São Paulo/Brazil)
- Yves Cabannes (University College London)
- Georges Deikun (UN-Habitat)
- Père Pedro Opeka (Akamasoa, Madagascar)
- Cesare Ottolini (International Alliance of Inhabitants)
- Malavika Vartak (Amnesty International)

### Opening:

- Cyril Royez (UrbaMonde President)
- Esther Alder (Administrative Councillor for the City of Geneva)
- Yanik Marguerat (Head of Communications for the Fédération Genevoise de Coopération)

### Moderation:

- press partner/urbamonde

## Tribunal on Evictions

Organized for the first time in 2011 by various civil society organizations as part of the World Zero Evictions Days – for the Right to Habitat, the Tribunal on Evictions is an opinion tribunal based on the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and other international legal instruments related to the enforcement of the right to housing and land. The Tribunal aims to present cases of housing rights’ violations taking place around the world to a panel of specialists in Geneva.

The aim is to strengthen recognition, proposals and struggles against violations of housing rights at local, national and global levels, including evictions of people from their homes and their land. It also aims to highlight the threats and violence directed at those defending these rights. The cases of forced evictions presented to the Tribunal are the result of a selection from among a large number of cases submitted following an international call.

The Jury will assess these situations and prepare recommendations to be presented to the economic and institutional actors responsible for forced evictions, the relevant countries and authorities and the social organizations aiding the inhabitants affected by the evictions. A follow-up with the relevant national and international bodies will then be undertaken. Beyond these recommendations, the testimonies reported by invited civil society actors from the countries in question will aim to initiate discussions and create ties of solidarity.

| <u>Witness accounts of evictions from:</u>                          | <u>Tribunal Jury</u>   |
|---|--|
| - Benedito Barbosa (Central Movimentos Populares, São Paulo/Brazil) | - Christophe Golay (Geneva Academy of International humanitarian law and human rights) |
| - Marcus George (Concerned citizens, Port Harcourt, Nigeria)        | - Gordon Aeschiman (Geneva Tribunal on Leases)   |
| - Luon Sovath (Cambodia)  | - Malavika Vartak (Amnesty International)  |
| - Anthony K. Prashanth (PROUD, Mumbai/India)                        | - Yves Cabannes (UCL)  |
| - Colette Lespinasse (GARR, Haiti)                                  | - Cesare Ottolini (IAI)  |

## Civil Society Initiatives for Sustainable Cities Award

The Geneva Habitat Forum will be hosting a selection of exemplary projects that have demonstrated civil society's capacity to take action and the sustainability of implemented strategies. The projects will be presented by their initiators, invited for the occasion. This encounter between projects from both the North and the South will encourage the sharing of practices and analysis of the factors of their success as well as their sustainability criteria. Selected through an international call that aimed to gather together a collection of initiatives, the projects will be recognized as "Civil Society Initiatives for Sustainable Cities" by a panel of experts. The initiatives will be presented on an online platform including details of each project in order to inform a wider audience beyond the event. A debate will take place between civil society actors and the general public. It will aim to inspire new citizen initiatives around the world and enrich ongoing projects.

### Invited initiatives:

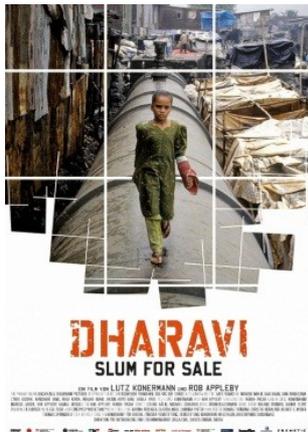
- Marli Carrara (UNIAO, Brazil)
- Père Pedro Opeka (Akamasoa, Madagascar)
- Humberto Antúnez (FUCVAM, Uruguay)
- Ramiro Garcia (DESCO - Villa El Salvador, Peru)
- Christian Faliu (Ponceau Ecodurable à Cergy -Paris/France)

### Review panel:

- Oumar Cissé (IAGU)
- Georges Deikun (UN-Habitat)
- Alexandro Mackinnon (GTM)
- Luca Pattaroni (EPFL)

## Film and debate evening: "a planet of slums...for sale!"

With the screening of "Dharavi, Slum for Sale" by Swiss



director Lutz Konermann, the film & debate evening "*A planet of slums... for sale!*" will immerse the audience into the world of Dharavi, one of the largest slums in Asia, located in the heart of Mumbai. In January 2007, the city and state authorities decided to "clean up" this area of nearly a million people so that Mumbai could once and for all become a modern metropolis. The film follows the journey of former project manager, Mukesh Mehta, whose "public-private partnership" seemed to convince the government and international investors. But thousands of inhabitants of Dharavi rose up against it. His project is a test for Mumbai and for a world where globalization can even make profits on poverty... **Discover the other side of the picture painted by "Slumdog Millionaire"!**

The screening will be followed by a debate with the participation of Lutz Konermann ("Dharavi, Slum for Sale" director), Mukesh Mehta (urban planner formerly in charge of the Dharavi Redevelopment project), Matias Echanove and Rahul Srivastava (URBZ) and Isabelle Milbert (professor at the IHEID)

### Round table:

- Lutz Konermann (director)
- Mukesh Mehta (urban planner)
- Matias Echanove and Rahul Srivastava (URBZ)

### Moderator:

- Isabelle Milbert – professor at IHEID

## Inhabitants' March

To expand the audience beyond those already aware of urban and international cooperation issues, a series of street actions will be proposed to call the public's attention to violations of the right to housing throughout the world. The

Inhabitants' March will be the major event, taking participants from the southern hemisphere and from Geneva through the emblematic sites of civil society's urban projects in Geneva.

The Inhabitants' March will begin in the Pâquis area and stop off at Ilôt 13 before ending up on the Place des Nations, home to the UN, where the Tribunal's recommendations will be read publicly and prizes awarded to civil society initiatives. March participants will then be invited to make their way to the Vieusseux area for the Geneva Cooperatives Day to create ties of solidarity between the two events.

### Practical information - venues

#### **Maison des Associations socio-politiques**

15 rue des Savoises,  
1205 Geneva

#### **Uni Mail**

Auditoire MS160  
Bd du Pont-d'Arve 40  
1205 Geneva



# Inhabitants' March route

- 1 Jeudi 27: Université de Genève, UniMail, Salle M5160
- 2 Vendredi 28: Maison des Associations, 15 rue des Savoises
- 3 Samedi 29: Marche des Habitants
- 4 9h00, Temple des Pâquis, 49 rue de Berne
- 5 11h00, îlot 13, 14 rue de Montbrillant
- 6 12h00, Place des Nations



## D. Partners

UN-Habitat, Amnesty International, International Alliance of Inhabitants, Habitat International Coalition, PALC, Asloca, Coopératives d'habitation de la région franco-valdo-genevoise, Réseau Humanitaire.ws, Festival du Film sur les Droits Humains.



Avec le soutien de la République et canton de Genève

FEDERATION GENEVOISE DE COOPERATION

urbaMonde



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## E. Press contacts

Julien Beauvallet, urbaMonde Vice-President

[julien.beauvallet@urbamonde.org](mailto:julien.beauvallet@urbamonde.org) +41 (0)76 360 61 24

Olivier Grobet, member of the Forum's organization committee

[olivier.grobet@urbamonde.org](mailto:olivier.grobet@urbamonde.org) +41 (0)76 401 47 37