Convergence of Inhabitants for the Right to Habitat

The “convergence” of organizations and initiatives within the World Social Forum, meeting at Dakar, 10 February 2011, report their common position and commitment within the WSF and beyond. That is reflected in the following statement delivered by Habitat International Coalition General Secretary Ana Sugranyes today at the closing of WSF 2011.

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Through the ten last years, the processes of coalescence, “articulation,” or convergence among militants, social movements, inhabitant organizations and initiatives to support defenders of the right to the habitat is now consolidated. We gather around the struggles for the implementation of fundamental economic, social and cultural rights (ESCR) to defend the structure of the family, rural and urban communities, and a life commonly founded on the inclusion of all, particularly women, children, homeless people, the handicapped, nomads and refugees. That brings us to the subject of ESCR corresponding to a “right to habitat.”

The constituent rights engage government obligations corresponding to the human rights to housing, water and sanitation, education, health and participation. They constitute the legal basis for claiming the collective rights to land and natural resources, livelihood, energy, transport, recreation and, in particular, the right to the city, food sovereignty and climatic justice. Arising from their relation with the family, the home, the district or village and public space, women are the principal agents of local struggles for the defense of the right to the habitat. However, they are also the very ones excluded from their rights, and that is why we must recognize and defend their rights in all our struggles.

The obstacles to the right to habitat multiply everywhere in the world independently of local cultural differences. Thus, we must denounce the commercial land and real estate pressures on the habitat of the poorest, most-deprived and vulnerable segments of the population; the monopolization of lands; the destruction of the popular districts and villages; the gentrification of the historic districts; the inflation of rents disproportionate to the stagnation of the incomes; megaprojects and mega-events whose planning and development violate the right of the affected populations to maintain their traditional places of residence; wars and the occupation of territories; the disasters falsely deemed “natural” and the effects of climate change that result in floods and landslides, as well as the pollution of water, the air and land. All these phenomena generate many—and increasing—evictions of rural and urban populations of the whole world. In all of these cases, it is necessary for us to denounce and underline the inequality and discriminatory practices against women impeding the realization of their rights to habitat.
Proposals and Commitments:

We, local, national, regional, continental and global organizations propose to join together here to building a world assembly of inhabitants. In this instance, we commit ourselves to pursue the building of solidarity so that all (women and men) are entitled to live in peace and dignity in our cities and country sides.

We, thus, commit ourselves to participate each year in the World Campaign for the Right to Habitat, which is commemorated the first Monday of October.

On 3 October 2011 and 1 October 2012, the themes that will bind us around the world are:

(I) causes and effects of the evictions, with the suffering and deeper impoverishment of the affected people in rural and urban communities;
(II) solidarity with the militants promoting and defending the right to habitat who suffer from repression and the violation of their civil and political rights.

The annual campaign for the right to habitat will manifest in as inclusive and diverse in nature, and will be coordinated by all the women and all the men in this world involved in this struggle, taking the form of, inter alia, denunciations, public activities, occupations, demonstrations, debates and meetings. The campaign will be diffused mainly by the social networks on the internet. It will be also relayed by the sites of all the committed movements, networks and organizations.

To meet these commitments, organizations and networks are constituting a Liaison Committee that is committed to agreeing on a platform and a plan of action that are the result of meetings organized by the inhabitants organizations in the popular neighborhoods and at the university campus in the framework of the WSF Dakar, to render concrete the solidarity to fight against the violations of rights that are rooted in common causes around the world.

Signed by the following organizations at Dakar, 10 January 2011:

International Networks:
HIC - Habitat International Coalition
IAI - International Alliance of Inhabitants
LOCOA - Leaders and Organizers of Community Organization in Asia
No-Vox

Local and national organizations:
ACIDAK - Association Comité Interbidonville, (Senegal)
AHTB - Association des Habitants et Travailleurs de Baraka (Dakar, Senegal)
Amandla Centre of Zimbabwe (Zimbabwe)
A Város Mindenkié (Hungary)
CAES (Paraguay)
CDV (México)
CHRA (Zimbabwe)
CISRS - National Forum for the Urban Poor (India)
Colectivo para el desarrollo del peru de villa maria dl triunfo (Perú)
Comité de Gestion des Inondations et de Déguerpissement de Médina Goumars, Guédiawaye (Senegal)
CONAM - Comités Promoteurs Nationaux de l'Assemblée Mondiale des Habitants Nationaux (Brazil)
CONAPAMAG (Guatemala)
Coordination of Duped Investors (Russia)
Coophabitat (Dominican Republic)
Cooperativa de Reciclado de Villa 31 (Argentina)
Coopérative Coralli (Italy)
Coordinadora de Colonias Unidas (Mexico)
DAL - Droit au Logement (France)
EMAD - Entente des Mouvements et Associations de Développement (Senegal)
FAMEMG – Minas Gerais (Brazil)
FBFF – Ceará (Brazil)
FEDEVI (Argentina)
Federación de Cooperativas Todos Juntos (Argentina)
FOVELIC (Peru)
GIU (Peru)
Grupo puertorriqueño de solidaridad con la niñez Dominico-Haiana CPNDH (Puerto Rico)
Movement And Soukali Médina Goumars (Dakar, Senegal)
Movimiento Nuevo Encuentro (Argentina)
National Tenants Union (Nigeria)
Omunga (Angola)
POHDH (Haiti)
PPEHRC – Poor People’s Economic Human Rights Campaign (USA)
PROUD and National Forum for the Urban Poor (India)
Red Metropolitana Inquilinos (Venezuela)
RNHC (Cameroon)
Shelter for the Poor (Bangladesh)
Thames Valley Gypsy Council (UK)
Tenants Union (Russia)
Tonderai Ndira Housing Cooperative (Zimbabwe)
UCISV-Ver (Mexico)
Unione Inquilini (Italy)
Union Popular Valle Gomez, D.F. (Mexico)
Youth Governance and Environmental Programme (Kenya)

Also endorsing:
ABONG - Brazilian Association of NGOs
AITEC - Association Internationale des Techniciens et Chercheurs (France)
ALOP - Asociación Latinoamericana de Organizaciones de Promoción
CENCA (Peru)
CERPAC - Centre de Recherche Populaire pour l’Action Citoyenne(Senegal)
ENDA - Economie Populaire (Senegal)
ENDA - Relais pour le Développement Urbain Participé (Senegal)
FAL - Forum des Autorités Locales
Handicap International
Intermondes (Senegal)
Plateforme DESC Sénégal – RADI
WISEEP (Ghana)