



Urban Movements Building Convergences at the World Social Forum

The current financial crisis demonstrates the limits of capitalism, the hazards of malign neglect in its insufficient regulation and the rush to possess and consume more. The financial crisis, with its manifold consequences, is just one of many threats to life in cities and human settlements everywhere, distorted by land speculation, urban megaprojects, agrobusiness and the privatization of public goods and services that generate multiple forms of social exclusion and the environmental catastrophe. Meanwhile, this pattern usurps the production, development opportunities and very populations from the land such that intensifies the rural/urban divide.

The different phases of this crisis affect the livelihoods of all citizens, especially the working classes and the poor, who cannot assert their basic rights to land, adequate housing, decent work, public space, education, health or effective participation in policy formulation. A clear indicator of the intensity of this multifarious crisis is the increased frequency and widespread nature of forced evictions further victimizing those same social groups.

In the cities, not only are these conflicts concentrated and highly visible, but so, too, are the opportunities for change and for advancing a “Right to the City” *in this wider context of a threatened habitat shared by all*. The claim to this composite right emanates from the pursuit of another possible city, a new paradigm that creates an alternative to the false-but-dominant neoliberal pretenses and allows for the convergence of social movements articulating a common vision of a shared habitat of human rights, social justice and environmental preservation/ sustainability.

The World Social Forum is a space where it is possible to identify capacities and networks to promote the Right to the City, and a unique opportunity particularly to form common cause with the indispensable and equally urgent struggles to uphold the rights and livelihoods of peasants, landless and indigenous peoples.

This Forum already brings together forces of resistance and problem-solving. The protagonists of this new vision arise from social movements, academia, professional associations and local government, as well as labor movements, land-based communities, students, committed activists and residents of the planet everywhere who know marginalization, displacement, dispossession and loss of home and livelihood. Both the current crisis of capital and the destruction of the ecosystem augur only more and more-intense deprivation, not least in the form of predictable economic and natural disasters. Many of these organisations and individuals from around the world are present here in WSF 2009 Amazonia. The networks linking and interlacing these groups and individuals subscribe to the following points of convergence:

- Promoting the Right to the City without forced evictions and toward urban structural reform, coincident with WSF Objective 6;
- Democratising the World Urban Forum (WUF) to be held in Rio de Janeiro during early 2010 such that social movements and activists may participate fully and effectively with UN-HABITAT and the hosts in the organisation, preparation and staging this event;
- Including the vision of the Right to The City and its relation to other movements to claim a

human rights habitat in the preparation and development of the WUF;

- Articulating struggles for urban inclusion in WSF 2010 to build on the 2008 experience of a global call for simultaneous local, national and regional fora to articulate and develop the Right to the City concept;
- Cultivating opportunities for outreach and enter strategic dialog with rural and indigenous movements, in order to refine and harmonize claims to our common human rights habitat and form practical solidarity in doing so;
- Preparing a popular urban forum leading up to WSF 2011.

Committing to this convergence are:

Asociacion Latinoamericana Organizaciones de Promocion (ALOP)*
Association Internationale des Techniciens, Experts et Chercheurs (AITEC)*
Centre for Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE)
Dignity International (DI)
Forum Local Autorithies (FAL) *
Foro Nacional de Reforma Urbana, Brasil (FNRU)
Habitat International Coalition (HIC)
Habitat para la Humanidad, Latin America (HpH)
International Alliance of Inhabitants (IAI)
Servicio Latinoamericano Vivienda Popular (SELVIP)
Swedish Cooperative Centre (SCC)

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