



United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)  
Division of Social Policy and Development (DSPD)  
in collaboration with UNESCO and UN-HABITAT

**Expert Group Meeting**  
**“Creating an Inclusive Society: Practical strategies to promote  
social integration**

11 September 2007, Paris/Room XV

**Session V: The right to the city: citizenship social dimensions of social  
inclusion**

**INTERVENTION OF WATARU IWAMOTO, UNESCO**

**1-Introduction**

It is my honour as the Director of the Division of Social Sciences Research and Policies, to be entrusted with the MOST Program but as well of UN-HABITAT/ UNESCO joint project on “**URBAN POLICIES** and the right to the city” focused on **local democracy, urban governance and citizenship** launched here in Paris in March 2005 by Mrs Anna Tibaijuka Executive Director of UN-HABITAT and Mr Pierre Sané, Assistant Director General for Social and Human Sciences of UNESCO at the occasion of the signature of a cooperation MOU between the two agencies.

It is my pleasure to speak together with our colleague and friend Paul Taylor, who has been working before March 2005, hand to hand with us since the beginning of this joint project, to create a our research experts working group, to organize working meetings and to allow the presentation of a networking event on this topic at the last World Urban Forum in June 2006 in Vancouver with major personalities like the Vice Minister of Cities of Brazil or the Mayor of Montreal.

I would like to mention that the second UN-HABITAT/UNESCO meeting of this project, held in Barcelona in March 2006 at the invitation of the municipality, has attracted the interest of many major international NGOs such as Metropolis, the United Cities and Local

Governments Association (UCLG), and the Commonwealth Local Government Forum. The representation of such important bodies at this meeting was certainly indicative of the interest, major cities are now taking in United Nations research on all aspects of urbanization, particularly with regard to the social segregation that exists in so many of our cities, the fragmentation of urban space and capacity-building to enable local authorities to cope with the new challenges posed by the urbanization phenomenon.

## **2-The context at UNESCO:**

Over the past 60 years, the human rights affirmed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) have gradually become recognized, expanded, and incorporated into the ordinary lives of individuals and social groups, thus expressing the needs, questions and claims of our times. However, there are many in the international community who have argued that certain rights need further elaboration at national and regional level on the basis of the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, such as the right to develop, the right to safe drinking water, the right to a clean environment , which would contribute to the needs and rights of all city dwellers, regardless of their religion, age, gender, race , well off or not...to fully enjoy urban life with all the services and advantages the city has to offer, as well as taking an active part in city management as part of their responsibilities.

Since Habitat II (1996), the Social and Human Sciences Sector at UNESCO has been actively engaged in stimulating international comparative research on the formulation and implementation of new urban policies taking into account: UNESCO strategy on Human Rights approved in 2003 and the UNESCO “Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity” approved in 2001. UNESCO/UN HABITAT project is also related to the issue of civic education: how to train citizens to live harmoniously in an environment called “The City”? I am convinced that citizen education and training is at the basis of a sustainable development for our urbanized societies. The study on the different ways and modalities to include citizen participation to municipal decision processes constitute a specific focus for our of UNESCO/UN HABITAT joint project on “Urban policies and the right to the city”.

## **3- Achievements at UNESCO: three UNESCO chairs to promote social cohesion :**

As UNESCO is responsible for education and sciences, we have a specific programme named “UNESCO Chair”, major tool to promote both higher education and scientific research. UNESCO designates the chair of the university in innovative scientific field, upon recommendation of the national Commission of the Member States.

### **i-Growing Up In Cities, Cornell University/NY 2006**

The research program explores and documents successful strategies for child and youth participation in urban change and management; the necessary organizational, political and social frameworks to support success; and the benefits of participatory approaches in young people's lives and communities. This UNESCO Chair enhances the capacity of research institutions, governments, development agencies, and community-based organizations to engage young people as meaningful partners in urban change and management through action research and youth participation in local and regional projects and programs.

### **ii-Urban Policies and citizenship, Ecole Nationale des Travaux Publics, Lyon 2007**

International research on this issue is receiving support from a UNESCO Chair – Urban policies and citizenship – which is established in Lyon. Universities in Canada, Chile, Mexico, Morocco and Lebanon have chosen the Lyon Research Consortium to house the Chair which receives funding from the City of Lyon, the City of St Étienne, the Rhone-Alpes region, and France's public investment organization.

This UNESCO Chair addresses a number of issues and thematic areas that are currently at the core of the transformations mentioned above: the tools of urban democracy, access to “common goods”, cultural diversity and its consideration by public urban authorities, and, finally, empowerment.

### **iii- Urban policies and migrants integration, University of Venice 2008:**

This UNESCO Chair, co financed by public and private bodies in Italy, will contribute *to produce better understanding on how to improve good urban governance to promote the inclusion of international migrant and their* 'Rights, responsibilities and Urban citizenship'. In an urbanising and globalized world, governments must learn to deal with the issue of international migration through ad hoc programmes and policies. However, in dealing with the international migrants a range of different protagonists have to interact: institutions and individuals, public and private, legal and illegal. The UNESCO Chair will help producing a better understanding on how to improve good urban governance to promote the inclusion of international migrant and their 'Rights, Responsibilities and urban citizenship' through the production of more reliable and updated information and critical analysis on the issue.

urban revitalization that take into account principles of sustainable development and in particular of sustainability and social justice;

- clarify notions on urban revitalization in historical districts in order to find a common language while taking into account the shared values set out in UNESCO and UN-HABITAT international documents on urban governance.

### **4-Porto Alegre's World Conference on the development of cities: democratic innovation and social transformations for inclusive cities of the 21th century” 13/16 February 2008 :**

the idea of this world conference was launched by our friend Cesar Buzatto during our last working meeting of 11/12 December 2006 in Paris with UNESCO/UN HABITAT experts working group and in cooperation with Montreal . Mr Buzatto, Coordinator for this

conference at Porto Alegre's municipality will certainly give you latter on further information about it.

## 5—Questions

**All the above information conducts me to submit to you the elements below for our discussion on the concept "The right to the city" and "How to promote urban citizenship?"**

The conception of a "right to the city" for all urban dwellers, restructure the power relations which underlie urban space, transferring control from capital and the state over to urban inhabitants. The "Right to the City" is the right to "urban life, to renewed centrality, to places of encounter and exchange, to life rhythms and time uses, enabling the full and complete *usage* of ... moments and places.

Taking into account recent urban trends, major social transformations and an increasing urban population, new information and communication technologies and the dynamics of globalization represent recent complications in the urban fabric. However, the decision-making processes in cities should be reframed so that all urban dwellers have rights and responsibilities to participate in urban politics and to be included in the decisions which shape their environment.

In this sense, UNESCO/UN HABITAT joint project "Urban policies and the right to the city" have drawn parallels between International/Regional charters, municipal statutes and urban development campaigns as diverse as the City Statute of Brazil, Montreal charter of rights and responsibilities or the "right to housing" pioneered by international NGO's like HIC or COHRE.

As globalization tendencies continue to spur concerns over the growing inequality and disenfranchisement among urban inhabitants, geographers and other social scientists have developed an important body of theoretical and empirical work examining the relationships between global restructuring and urban governance. Researchers have employed the concept of the "Right to the City" to describe some of the social movements manifesting in cities. These movements have been based on specific identities of difference (such as ethnicity, class, sexuality, gender, age, disability, homelessness, among other characteristics) and have sought claims to economic, environmental, social and spatial justice. In many cases, this research has influenced the implementation of the "Right to the City" tenants into urban policies, resulting in international/regional charters, coalitions of cities and municipal statutes, as well as in the development of numerous projects, programs, conferences and seminars.

Theoretical and empirical research has touched in particular the following themes : public space; public transportation (creating accessible cities insofar as schools, jobs and leisure activities are made available to children and youth, women, the elderly and the disabled); water rights; immigration and urban regeneration; the "masculinization" of cities; community garden preservation; "money space" and financial exclusion; urban citizenship; globalization and urban enfranchisement; justice; the spatial imagination; immigrants and political organizing; homelessness; and women's right to the city.

Broadly speaking, the "Right to the City" concept, which is not a legal binding right up till now, seeks to (1) promote equal access to the potential benefits of the city for all urban dwellers, (2) encourage the democratic participation of all urban dwellers in decision-making processes, notably on the municipal level, so that (3) urban inhabitants may fully realize their fundamental rights and responsibilities.

In general, the “participation” is characterized with the means of “identification” and “ownership”. However, I would like to point out that for the city manager, it constitutes also cost-effective means when we compare the cost which may occur in case of the conflict which happens without citizens’ participation and the cost for participation *a priori* such as the preliminary consultation and audience.

In “Practical Approaches to Urban Governance,” Edgar Pieterse and Jyri Juslén identify mainly four ways in which municipalities can deliver effective, efficient, relevant services to urban dwellers by: (1) developing city-wide decision-making frameworks so that different city stakeholders can “express their interests and vision for the city”; (2) mobilizing programs based on previously determined “flagship priorities”; (3) engaging in institutional reform, which entails a shift to a more demand-based orientation for municipal administration; and (4) monitoring projects and maintaining momentum, continually seeking to ameliorate existing programs and innovate new projects.

Our colleagues and myself are really willing to fully participate to this discussion to improve again our UN joint approach to this issue of urban citizenship, and the way to promote rights and responsibilities for inclusive cities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century bearing in mind major trends linked to rapid urbanization and major migrations impacts on urban life : these issues will be certainly at the core of the discussions of international meetings like the World Conference of Porto Alegre in feb 2008, during the WUF IV in Nanjing in October 2008 and certainly during the Shanghai EXOPO 2010 focused on “Better city, better life”;

Thank you for your attention

| WATARU IWAMOTO.