



27th WORLD CONGRESS OF ARCHITECTS – UIA2021RIO

RIO DE JANEIRO CHARTER

ALL THE WORLDS. JUST ONE WORLD. ARCHITECTURE-CITY 21

The 27th World Congress of Architects – UIA2021RIO gathered architects, urban planners, landscape designers, researchers, students, architecture and urbanism associations, social organizations, thinkers, planners of the city and citizens to discuss the future of cities and the city of the future. We hereby, all together, present joint proposals for building a fairer and more supportive, generous, powerful world with more welcoming cities.

At a time when degrading habitats and wasted resources are jeopardising Humankind, with the COVID 19 pandemic raising material threats to our existence, we express our sympathy to everyone affected by this public health tragedy, particularly those who have lost their lives and family members.

Above all, the pandemic highlighted interdependent relationships among the political, economic, social, cultural, and environmental dimensions which are fundamental to configure cities and territories as well as the urgent need to introduce inclusive public policies. From those dimensions shall emerge the City 21, aware of the climate challenges, of the need for quality spaces, public health, quality dwelling for all and the reduction of inequalities.

We call upon all those wishing to strengthen the links of citizenship to contribute to the construction of welcoming and healthy cities, where diverse cultures and peoples can live together in peace and harmony.

Whereas:

the COVID 19 pandemic exposed the weaknesses of thousands of cities all over the world, especially in the poor and developing countries;

the rising hegemony of financial capitalism has undermined the foundations of social well-being, as a public policy in countless countries, and its authoritarian and predatory character has overwhelmed forms of organisations in societies, particularly cities;

labour relations and living conditions have been undermined through the submission of scientific and technological means to the interests of corporations pursuing higher revenues, contributing to the reduction in jobs, and the elimination of professions;

major industrial and financial corporations have become hegemonic in global economic development, subordinating the State apparatus to the interests of socio-economic elites, contributing to the construction of segregated and exclusionary cities;

the extensive urbanisation model noted in several cities around the world results in social and spatial asymmetries that are usually expressed through illegal trespassing and predatory urban occupancy of rural land, wellsprings, forests and environmental protection areas;

at a global scale, the most perverse phase of this process is the vulnerability imposed on millions of people all over the world, who live in ramshackle housing in areas lacking infrastructure, and without the presence of the State;

dwellers in informal urban settlements are joined by millions of refugees sheltered – when this occurs – in cities, often under sub-human conditions;

cities and territories have become so unbalanced, to the point that human survival is threatened by the depletion of vital resources, the lack of drinking water, the perverse effects of climate change, the degradation of biodiversity and ecosystems, and public health problems;

extended life expectancy and dropping birth rates, changes in modes of production and consumption, and alterations in labour relations and harmonious living conditions require the re-significance of housing spaces and the city, as well as the relationship between architecture and core public health aspects;

racism, homophobia, xenophobia and misogyny are incompatible with reductions in inequality and the construction of fair and healthy cities;

the depletion of critical thinking, with little political discussion and a lack of belief in scientific knowledge favours the manipulation of public opinion and disfigures democratic processes, with the resurgence of autocratic regimens;

education is fundamental for training the practitioners who will produce the cities of the future;

through their humanistic training, architects and urban planners have an inherent commitment to the community, with respect for citizens' rights, and democracy;

the UIA, which was established after the end of World War II, when joint efforts were needed to rebuild ruined cities, urges tolerance in pursuit of a common purpose that transcends national boundaries, human progress through knowledge, appreciation and respect for the arts and sciences, and the development and use of appropriate technology tailored to human needs;

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based on the guidelines issued by the United Nations, UN-Habitat and UNESCO, expressed in Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda, presents the PROPOSALS FOR CITY 21, systematised into the four discussion tracks that steered the topics of its discussions:

1. DIVERSITY AND MIXTURE

Understood as the locus of economic, social, cultural and political development, the city should welcome all citizens. In this context, universal access to public utility services is a condition.

- 1.1 It must be acknowledged that the city is interdependent, it is active and receptive to the diverse constituent factors of life in society. There can be no development without cities adapted to contemporary demands.
- 1.2 There is no single urban form, just as there is no single culture. It is necessary to recognize the diverse forms of production for cities, including urban slums and poverty-stricken outlying areas, implementing programmes that bring these areas into compliance with infrastructure and public utility service demands;
- 1.3 The downtown area of cities represents the territorial citizenship, the historic and cultural heritage of society, a symbol of democratic space and the place for expressions of diversity. Downtown areas must be cared for permanently and their value enhanced, to prevent their symbolic, economic, political and social depletion;
- 1.4 Sustainable and long-lasting urban development policies must be accessible respond to people's specific characteristics, contradictions, interests and needs, taking issues related to age and race, into consideration, as well as social and environmental aspects, culture, gender, comfort, well-being, and work in the production of human shelter at its diverse scales;
- 1.5 There is an urgent need to find the conceptual homes and planning practices of urban planning and architecture, in order to encompass actions and processes that respond to the demands of more vulnerable groups, integrating issues related to income, gender and sexuality, race, cultural traditions and immigrants;
- 1.6 Architectural and urban planning decisions must take into account strategies for addressing inequalities, reducing poverty and strengthening democratic management of the territory, grassroots participation processes and actions that extend interdisciplinarity and intersectorality, giving a voice to the plurality of realities and social, ethnic and gender diversities;
- 1.7 Tendering out public works through complete project designs is a key element for infrastructure and construction quality and the enjoyment of urban spaces.

2. WEAKNESSES AND INEQUALITIES

The mainspring of a contemporary city must be the construction of a collective urban space that is planned and administered as a function of the State, through democratic and inclusive public policies, focused on combatting social and spatial inequalities.

- 2.1 Environmental crises and public health emergencies affect territories and populations unequally, whereby planning actions must assign high priority to more vulnerable territories, strengthening the local economy, halting and enhancing grassroots initiatives;
- 2.2 It is necessary to foster the implementation of integrated and democratic public works that ensure the right to the city for society as a whole, enhancing historical and cultural assets, acknowledging pre-existing features and preserving the environment for future generations;
- 2.3 Decent, healthy housing for all at appropriate locations, through financing tailored to the possibilities the neediest families is a matter of social justice and public health;
- 2.4 Universal access to public services – infrastructure, sanitation, transport, safety and security – is an essential condition for reducing weaknesses and inequalities in society, and for promoting healthy and sustainable cities;
- 2.5 The technical expertise of architects must share and converse with the wisdom of agents acting in the territory, taking into account, strategies for reducing poverty and inequalities in healthcare, with respect for civil rights, and strengthening democratic, shared, and participative management;
- 2.6 Technical advice and assistance on social housing must be considered as a public service that is permanent and available to all society, underscoring the possibilities of interceptor articulation and integrated actions addressing many different aspects of reality;
- 2.7 At the global level, public budgets must express the commitment to financing public policies focused on reducing weaknesses and inequalities, and combating poverty. High priority must be given to partnerships between architects and local organisations, supported by public funding.

3. CHANGES AND EMERGENCES

The good city is focused on the human condition, with respect for the environment and enhancing the value of its natural, historical and cultural heritage assets, with demographic densities that are coherent with the supply and upkeep of essential public services.

- 3.1 The contemporary city must be understood as a partner in the global drive focused on the climate and the planet. Public policies must be promoted that curtail the expansion of urban occupancy, while boosting the resilience and adaptability of the constructed environment, encouraging non-predictive mobility, the recovery of water resources, the rehabilitation of ecosystems and biodiversity, and reductions in the adverse effects of climate change, in ways that harmonise with the natural cycles at each location.
- 3.2 The promotion of “smart and creative cities” must combine urban instruments with technology and universal access to public services in equitable and inclusive ways, reversing unplanned expansion and environmental degradation, as well as social and spatial inequalities and risks;
- 3.3 Urban voids in the consolidated city must be filled by diverse architectures that combine densification, mixed uses, public services and spaces, green areas, new technologies and social, economic, and cultural diversities;
- 3.4 Conscious densification of areas endowed with infrastructure, without adversely affecting the urban fabric, is a tool for social inclusion, responding to housing needs and paving the way to greater social diversity and uses, while helping enhance the potential of public space as a locus for social interaction;
- 3.5 Architects, urban planners, institutions and social agents can and must work together in agreed ways with local populations, to endow ramshackle housing with safer and healthier conditions, in addition to providing infrastructure, lessening high-risk situations and public health emergencies;
- 3.6 Architecture must be provided through local materials, avoiding wasted resources, upgrading local workforce skills, community wisdom, customs and culture, and climate diversities;
- 3.7 The social and environmental determinants of health formulation, monitoring and assessment of public policies, adopting broad-based intersectoral and participative standpoints.

4. TRANSIENCE AND FLOWS

The inclusive and sustainable city provides spaces and efficient, good quality means of commuting in order to respond in a satisfactory manner to the needs of people, flows of materials and information is required by the contemporary world.

- 4.1 Urban mobility must be addressed in compliance with contemporary requirements, in terms of environmental resources and responding to the needs of populations in their daily commutes;

- 4.2 The multiplicity of modes of transportation, particularly public transport and active means of transport – walking, cycling and others – is a condition for promoting urban mobility, in the pursuit of social equity and the promotion of healthy, sustainable cities;
- 4.3 Mobility and land use planning and occupancy are tools that must be integrated to underpin an even distribution of the benefits of urbanisation, as well as for controlling urban expansion;
- 4.4 The pedestrian is the main protagonist of the city. Flow areas must be designed as spaces for daily activities by pedestrians, with the inclusion of persons with reduced mobility, different age brackets and social classes;
- 4.5 Transition areas must be planned and designed integration with cultural landscapes, expanding access to the city and its facilities, without assigning high priority to absolute solutions;
- 4.6 Public space is the locus of meetings and citizenship practices. Urban design is not only for constructing public space, but also for crafting democratic and inclusive solutions;
- 4.7 Architecture and Urban planning are tools for welcoming and coping with the contemporary phenomenon of migration, contributing to the social, economic and cultural inclusion of migrant and refugee populations.

Architecture and urban planning have key roles to play in the ongoing construction of better cities that are fairer and more equitable. Design is an essential tool for contributing to adequate planning of cities, materialising ideas, fostering discussion and ensuring the feasibility of transformations.

All the Worlds. Just One World. Architecture & City 21.

For a Better World

Signatory organizations:

IAB; IAB-RJ; CAU-BR; CAU-RJ; FNA; ABEA; ASBEA; ABAP; FENEA; CEAU-RJ, ANPARQ; ANPUR; ABDEH; DOCOMOMO Brasil; FIOCRUZ; ICOMOS Brasil; CIALP; FPAA.

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