



WELCOMING REMARKS BY

**DANIEL BIAU
DIRECTOR
REGIONAL AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION
DIVISION**

**HUMAN LIBRARY CONFERENCE
Nairobi, 15 February 2011**

Dr. Joan Clos, Executive Director,
Dear Colleagues and Friends,

It is with immense pleasure that I welcome all of you to an event, organized for the first time in the history of our agency, which aims at collecting our multiple experiences and at reflecting on the successes and difficulties faced since the creation of UN-Habitat, particularly in the developing world. This meeting will certainly help our new Executive Director in designing a new strategy for the coming decade.

Twenty-five years ago, I attended my first Governing Council called at that time the Commission on Human Settlements. The meeting was held in Istanbul in the spring of 1986. At that meeting Mark Hildebrand and Mike Cohen presented a new global programme which was to become a flagship of Habitat, the Urban Management Programme (UMP). I was extremely interested by this multi-agency initiative and by the fact that Habitat was moving from housing to city management, together with the World Bank and UNDP. As you all know, UMP remains a milestone in the history of Habitat. Both UMP and its subsidiary companions, the Sustainable Cities Programme and the Safer Cities Programme, were born in the Technical Cooperation Division (TCD). Later on, in the 1990s, we also created the Disaster Management Programme and the Indicators Programme. I believe that these major initiatives played a key role in the building of a strong Habitat, and in supporting our country activities. Indeed technical cooperation starts and ends with country activities because it is at country level that we are able to influence national and local policies, and to strengthen related capacities. The interaction and synergy between global programmes and country projects has been a trademark of our technical cooperation. Equally, the complementarity between our operational activities and our normative messages has been demonstrated in many countries, for instance in South Africa, in Senegal, in Vietnam or in Colombia.

Dear Dr. Clos,

I have to give you a rapid overview of our technical cooperation programme. In quantitative terms we have implemented more than 1000 projects in more than 100 countries. We have mobilized and disbursed more than 2 Billion USD over the last 25 years. We, in this room, have created a number of impressive networks. We have built human settlements expertise in many countries and in all regions of the planet. We have worked with Mayors, Ministers, senior officials, and also with NGOs and CSOs and made Habitat known and respected all over the world. We have cooperated with large numbers of international organizations, not only UNDP and the World Bank, but also UNHCR, UNDCP, ILO, UNEP, the regional commissions, OCHA, and more recently the European Commission. Funds have been raised from bilateral development partners, but also from Foundations and private companies. Governments from developing and transition countries have contributed financially to our projects and programmes, including in poor countries such as Chad and in emerging economies such as Egypt. Our budgets have been managed transparently by very committed and competent Programme Management Officers. Auditors have never found any major mistake in our accounts and we have been able to overcome all the administrative hurdles which hampered and continue to hamper our work. We have been less efficient in reporting and evaluation, due to lack of time and resources. But we have published a number of good reports on country experiences (including on Somalia, Iraq, Afghanistan and Indonesia) as well as forward-looking guidelines through our global programmes, such as UMP and SCP, who invented, for instance, the concepts of City Consultations and City Development Strategies.

Dear Colleagues,

I have worked with all (i.e. seven) Executive Directors of UN-Habitat since my recruitment by Dr. Arcot Ramachandran in February 1988. I have to state here, in front of Dr. Clos, that they have all appreciated our technical cooperation activities and enjoyed the resulting support by developing country representatives during the sessions of the Commission and the Governing Council. They have visited, although exceptionally, some of our country projects, and recognized our impact on poor communities. But they have consistently forgotten to provide core resources to support our technical cooperation activities, trusting that our fund mobilization abilities

would be sufficient to ensure financial sustainability. This has been a recurrent disappointment among TCD colleagues, myself included. This has forced us to move more and more into post-disaster projects, with great success particularly in Asia, in order to get the required overhead income. I hope that this problem could be addressed in the near future, including by involving more regular budget staff in country activities.

Dear Friends,

You all know our new Executive Director who welcomed us in Barcelona for the second session of the World Urban Forum in 2004. He has been very close to Habitat for the last 12 years, since he attended the 1999 session of the Commission on Human Settlements, where he spoke on behalf of local authorities. The same 17th session of the Commission decided to establish UNACLA (Resolution 17/18) which was born in January 2000 under his Chairmanship. Later on, Barcelona hosted the world headquarters of UCLG, again thanks to its dynamic Mayor. Dr. Clos is the first Executive Director with a serious and recognized experience in city management. A must.

Now, Dr. Clos, I wish to introduce several colleagues who have accepted to join us today from different parts of the world and to cost-share the cost of their participation. These colleagues have been the backbone of the Technical Cooperation Division and therefore the backbone of UN-Habitat over a generation. They will introduce themselves after the break but I want to put a brief spotlight on them at the very start of our proceedings, as they really deserve your consideration and our public appreciation. I will be brief and will not follow any seniority order. I am then pleased to express my gratitude to the following “elders”:

- **Mark Hildebrand** who started in Chad in 1976, then joined the Africa Section and coordinated our APA Unit (Asia, Pacific and LAC) during 1983-89. He was Chief, TCD until 1994, then Director of Programme Coordination. He initiated, *inter alia*, the UMP and was the first manager of the Cities Alliance in 1999-2006;
- **Mathias Hundsalz** was Chief, RDD until 1999 and negotiator of the Habitat Agenda in Istanbul. He started in the field before the Vancouver Summit of 1976, in Uganda and Burkina, and went back to

- RTCD at the end of career. Recently he evaluated the first generation of our country programmes (HCPDs);
- **Roberto Ottolenghi** also started in RDD, he was the active promoter of regionalisation and founder/Director of ROLAC in Rio in 1996. Since 2002 he is a senior consultant, always available to catch a plane and prepare or evaluate any of our projects ;
 - **Disa Weerapana** joined Habitat in 1989, he negotiated the opening of ROAP with Toshi and myself and was Deputy Director of the Fukuoka Office until 2001;
 - **Heinz Kull** started in Myanmar and Haiti, he became Chief of our Africa Unit and co-leader of the Disaster Management Unit in 1994. Then he was the first (and efficient) Director of PSD;
 - **Jorge Gavidia** started in RDD, he was co-leader of DMU, managed our Iraq programme during Saddam (Oil-for-Food) and became the second Director of ROLAC in 2002-2007;
 - **Sylvie Lacroux** was section chief in RDD, then became CTA in Burkina, headed our Geneva Liaison Office and is now Deputy Mayor of Ferney Voltaire;
 - **Jay Moor** started in 1990 in our Asia Unit, he created the GUO, moved to the indicators programme and initiated the State of the World's Cities Report series;
 - **Alberto Paranhos**, former Director of Planning of Curitiba, was the recognized pillar of ROLAC all over his 18 years with UN-Habitat;
 - **Ole Lyse** was the designer, together with **Jochen Eigen**, of the SCP. He worked with ROAAS in several African countries and lives happily in Kenya;
 - **Kariba Traore** also started in Haiti, then became CTA in several hardship countries such as Djibouti, Rwanda, Burundi and Chad. He is a builder, a sites and services specialist at ease in post-conflict situations;
 - **Seydou Sy Sall** designed and headed the BAHSO (Cooperative Housing Bureau) in Dakar before becoming Minister, then he moved to urban management and is now an international consultant;
 - **Jan Meeuwissen** started at UNCHS(Habitat) 29 years ago in Lagos. He is our longest serving manager at present, the de facto deputy of **Toshi Noda**. I think he also represents **Lalith**, the third pillar of ROAP (our most successful fund mobilization branch);
 - **Sudipto Mukerjee** and **Doudou Mbye** are the most recent successive leaders (CTA) of our Iraq Programme. Sudipto is now with UNDP while Doudou will soon move from Amman to ROAAS headquarters;

- **Tatiana Roskoshnaya** managed our Russian and Eastern European portfolio from 2002 to 2010. She now lives in beautiful Saint Petersburg;
- **Jean-Marc Rossignol** worked for 14 years as CTA, starting in Burundi, then in Senegal. He is now based in Kigali as private architect and planner;
- **David Kithakye** and **Antonio Yachan** were both senior HSOs in ROAAS for many years and are still very active in Kenya and Chile respectively;
- **Ali Shabou** was the Chief of our Arab Information for decades, familiar with all Middle-East countries. I am sure that he appreciates the current political evolution of the Arab world;
- And finally I salute our fantastically creative Programme Managers (or PMOs) **Ingunde, Jan, Henk and Eric**, who all moved to other agencies when they became too qualified for UN-Habitat.

Thank you All for your presence today in Nairobi.

I also need to mention those who were very interested in this meeting but could not travel for personal reasons, in particular: **Jochen Eigen, Franz Vanderschueren, Emiel Wegelin, Dinesh Mehta, Yves Cabannes, Ximena de la Barra, Sara Wakeham, Kidane Alemayehu, Farouk Tebbal, Wagui Siby** as well as my first boss **Paul Bouda** and my predecessor in the Africa Unit, Minister **Vann Mollivann**. They all send us their greetings and their best wishes for Habitat's future. In addition Emiel and Farouk sent us their own written contributions.

Sadly it is also my duty to mention several colleagues who played an important role in our Division and in our history, but who unfortunately passed away and leave us with their image and souvenir. I wish to quote their names and ask for a moment of silence afterwards. They were all my friends, and certainly your friends. Their spirit is with us in Gigiri this morning. We fully remember:

- **Emmanuel Gapyisi**, from Rwanda,
- **Seth Sendashonga**, from Rwanda,
- **Ismail Hammad**, from Egypt,
- **Abdoulaye Sow**, from Senegal,
- **John Parkin**, from the U.K.,
- **Andres Necochea**, from Chile,

- **Peter Swan**, from Australia,
- **Andy Van der Schiff**, from Zimbabwe,
- **Juko Hatva**, from Finland,
- **Francois Muhirwe**, from Burundi.

(moment of meditation)

Thank you. As Amadou Hampate Ba said in 1960 “In Africa, when an elder dies, it is a library in flames”. This is particularly true at UN-Habitat: when a colleague goes, a part of our institutional and technical memory vanishes. This is why **Alioune, Alain, Liliana** and myself have decided to organize this first Human Library Conference, to try and take stock of our collective wisdom and of our diverse experiences, and even of our funny ideas and unrealistic suggestions, and to move into the future.

Here are some 25 veterans who have made UN-Habitat, who have formulated and shared new modes of cooperation in urban management, in post-disaster recovery, in community contracts, in urban indicators, in reporting on the State of Cities, in housing policy and instruments, in sites and services and urban upgrading. They have negotiated tirelessly with Multilaterals, Bilaterals, Governments, Local Authorities and NGOs. They have drafted hundreds of Project documents, including budgets and periodical revisions. They have recruited hundreds of experts, thousands of consultants, executed 2 Billion dollars of projects, have built an immense Habitat-related network, a WEB of expertise. Those in this room collectively represent more than 500 years of professional experience at UN-Habitat. They have built institutions across the world and they have also built the Agency itself. They have really worked as a Team, with profound respect for each other. They have witnessed our ups and downs. They are at your disposal to transfer their knowledge, know-how and contacts to the young generations of the City Agency.

Dear ED, Dear Colleagues,

We will produce an in-depth report on this Conference as well as a video-film containing interviews of all participants. Younger colleagues are mobilized to interact with senior colleagues during these interviews.

Moderators have been selected from within UN-Habitat. They are all current or former RTCD staff, in senior positions, both in Global Division (GD), Monitoring and Research Division (MRD), Office of the Executive Director (OED) and Regional Offices. They are the leading members of our professional family. You know all of them (**Alioune, Toshi, Cecilia, Axumite, Mohamed, Paul, Eduardo, Mariam**). They are still insiders for a few years and I wish that they will never become complete outsiders. The Human Library should not burn, it will last and expand if we so decide!

Dear Friends,

On behalf of RTCD and other staff of UN-Habitat, I wish this brainstorming conference full success and a very warm welcome back to all of you.

Karibuni and Asanteni Sana.