



Human Settlements Bulletin

Official publication of the United Nations NGO Committee on Human Settlements * November 2008

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**NGO COMMITTEE ON
HUMAN SETTLEMENTS**
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in partnership with UN-Habitat,
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Chairperson's Message

Harold Takooshian, PhD
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Since 1976, at the first World Urban Forum in Vancouver, BC, Canada, the mission of our United Nations NGO Committee on Human Settlements (CHS) has been to work with the U.N. Habitat Office to advance its mission, to cope with global issues of housing, urbanization, sustainability. CHS is one of the 22 committees of the UN Conference on Non-governmental organizations, CONGO. The world-wide web offers updated details on the work of Habitat at www.unhabitat.org, CONGO at www.ngocongo.org, and our CHS at www.ngocho.org.

In recent years, the CHS meets monthly at the U.N. headquarters in New York City, with officers representing a diverse array of fields and organizations. CHS also maintains a monthly listserv for people world-wide working on habitat issues. People can join the free listserv simply by contacting CHS webmaster Rick Sanford at committee@ngocho.org.

Since 2005, one of the key activities of CHS has been to host a monthly lecture series in New York City. This has brought together experts from a variety of organizations—listed on page 2—to review problems in human settlements, and some creative solutions to these problems.

Another activity has been to work with Habitat to arrange the annual New York City program for World Habitat Day, the first Monday each October. On 6 October 2008, the two-part NYC World Habitat

Program began with a morning forum hosted by Fordham University to focus on “Green cities of the 21st Century: Harmonizing natural & built environments,” and ending with an afternoon forum at the United Nations on more general topics. These forums also helped to publicize the World Urban Forum 4, in Nanjing, China on 3-6 November 2008.

Thanks to our webmaster Rick Sanford, the Committee now offers a wealth of news, reports, and links on its website, www.ngocho.org.

This Human Settlements Bulletin highlights some recent news on human settlements, and welcomes readers' comments for future issues.



The Committee on Human Settlements at the United Nations in New York, October 2008.

**World Urban Forum 4
Nanjing, China
3-6 November 2008**

 **World Urban Forum 4**
第四届世界城市论坛
03 - 06 November 2008 Nanjing, China



Monthly CHS Speakers in New York City

2005, Feb: **Branca Balac** (Columbia), Health in favelas in Belgrade.
March: **Harold Takooshian** (Fordham), Urban psychology and "nervous energy."
April: **Stan Cohen** (Earth Society), The Earth Society and world peace.
May: **Janice E. Perlman** (World Bank), A 30-year study of a Brazilian favela.
June: **Robert V. Levine** (CSU-Fresno), Village of Hope homeless self-help community.
July: **N. David Milder** (Danth Consulting), Downtown revitalization: Why and how. www.danth.com
Oct: **Wendy Brawer** (geographer), Greenmaps for New York City. www.greenmap.org
Nov: **Vahan Tanal**, PE (Parsons Brinckerhoff), socially responsible urban engineering. www.pbworld.com

2006, Jan: **Diana Balmori** (architect), Urban greenroofs. www.balmori.com
Feb: **Liam Strain** (Natl Parks Svc), Urban parks. www.nps.org
March: **Ozgem Ornektekin** (engineer, Parsons Brinckerhoff), Sustainable development in developing nations www.pbworld.com
April: **Robert Levine** (CSU-Fresno), Civil behavior: How do the world's cities compare?
May: **Peter R. Walker** (psychologist, Connecticut), Defensible space. www.defensiblespace.com
Aug 29: **Frederica Pietracci** (UN-DESA Division of Sustainable Development), CSD: Upcoming plans.
Oct 2: UN World Habitat Day 2006. 10 presenters at the UN Dag Hammarskjold auditorium.
Nov 14: Symposium on green buildings, 6 participants + 14 student presenters.
Dec 12: **Anita Thomas** -1 (CONGO), CONGO + the Human Settlements Committee. www.ngocongo.org

2007, Jan 16: **Anita Thomas** -2 (CONGO), Current plans.

Feb 13: **Anita Thomas** -3 (CONGO), Upcoming plans.
March 13: **Carter Craft**, (urban planner, www.waterwire.com), Waterfront NYC, 2030.
April 10: **Tim Wilkens** (Global Housing Foundation), Financing houses for the working poor. Also **Ron Dressler** (Great NYC Sing!) and **Justin Nobel** (Environmental journalism).
May 8: (a) **Meghan Marrero** (U.S. Satellite), teaching children about climate change. (b) **Parviz Morewedge** (Rutgers) housing crisis in North Africa, www.gsp-online.com
June 12: **Enrico Campagnoli**, Realty.
July 10: **Joel Soden** (Parsons Brinckerhoff), Rebuilding New York. www.pbworld.com
Oct 1: UN World Habitat Day 2007. 9 presenters at the UN Dag Hammarskjold auditorium.
Nov 13: **Joshua Lockwood** (NYC Habitat for Humanity), NYCHH vision for 2008. www.habitatny.org
Dec 11: **Jan Peterson** (Huairou Commission), Women in the Habitat agenda in 2008. www.huairou.org

2008, Jan 8: (a) **Richard May**, FAICP, Sustainability of the master plan for NYC. (b) **Andy Troy** (Meet Up), urban social networking on the internet. www.andytroy.com
Feb 12: **Yamina Djacta** (UN Habitat-NY), The UN Habitat agenda for 2008. www.unhabitat.org
March 11: (no) **Armen Kharazian** (Armenian Assembly), Housing challenges overseas. www.aaainc.org
April 8: **Arline Bronzaft** (NYC Council on Environment), Urban noise reduction
May 13: **Sheri Koonos** (author), Prefabulous housing. www.sherikoonos.com
June 10: (no) **HJStern** www.nycivic.org
June 24: **Lou Nowikas**, Sustainability: Transforming a landmark into a green building www.hearst.com
Sept 16: **Hon. Henry J. Stern** (NYCivic), Urban good government www.nycivic.org
Oct 6: World Habitat Day 2008, "harmonious cities," 2 panels at Fordham and the UN. www.ngochs.org
Oct 14: **Curtis Sliwa** (Guardian angels), Safe cities: The role of individuals. www.guardianangels.org



Sustainability: Converting Yesterday's Landmark Into Today's Green Building



Louis Nowikas, MS,
Hearst Corporation **

Why and how did the Hearst Tower on Eighth Avenue and West 57 Street in New York City, become "the greenest building in the City"—and a model for other commercial buildings?

The fascinating history of the Hearst building begins in 1928, when William Randolph Hearst already headed a publishing empire. His Hearst Corporation unveiled its impressive new headquarters building in New York City, designed by set designer Joseph Urban as an early hub of the cultural center emerging at Columbus Circle. While plans to add a multi-storey "overbuild" to this six-storey building had to be halted by the Great Depression in the 1930s, the handsome building was designated an official landmark towards the end of the 20th Century.

On 12 September 2001, the Hearst leadership was ready to consider its long-awaited completion of the Hearst Tower, when the World Trade Center was attacked one day earlier. The concern of continued terrorism naturally pushed many NYC corporations into 3 directions, to: (1) flee Manhattan, (2) decentralize all facilities, and (3) avoid tall buildings that could become targets. In the spirit of Hearst, its board courageously voted unanimously to proceed to remain in Manhattan, and consolidate all its

groups into one bold new tower in Manhattan. Moreover, its “green” architect Lord Norman Foster would help erect the “greenest” building in New York. With permission from the NYC Landmarks Commission, Hearst carefully retained the old stone structure below, underneath a magnificent new glass tower above.

Opened in 2006, the unique “diagrid” glass office tower has literally hundreds of green design features at every turn, to earn it the City’s first completely “Gold” LEED Certification (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design). For example, the huge waterfall in the three-storey atrium is not only a form of moving art, but cools the building from a 14,000 gallon rainwater reclamation tank. More details and a video tour of the Tower appear at www.hearst.com.

What impact has such a green building on the behavior and feelings of its occupants and their organizations? Lou noted many surprising effects--like lower absenteeism, and increased interaction of the staffs of Hearst’s many publications. Lou’s office is monitoring this, and he kindly offered to return to the UN later this year, to describe many surprising human impacts of Hearst’s green building.

**** Louis Nowikas, MS, is Director of Operations, Real Estate, and Facilities for the Hearst Corporation in New York City since 2004. He earned his MS in Engineering Management from the New Jersey Institute of Technology. The Hearst publication Being Green is at http://www.hearst.com/being_green/CPR%203084%20Green%20PDF%2016.pdf**



Safe cities: Citizens’ Role in Public Safety



Curtis Sliwa

*Alliance of Guardian Angels ***

With crime a problem in cities world-wide, what can individual citizens do to increase public safety? One solution is citizen anti-crime groups. One model is the Guardian Angels, which expanded from New York City in 1979, to inspire groups in 140 cities world-wide in 2008. At the meeting of the UN Human Settlements Committee on 14 October 2008, Guardian Angels founder Curtis Sliwa described the Angels—their origin, growth, and current operations.

Origins. Back in 1979, like many cities, New York crime was “out of control.” Police had given up. Goups of young toughs fearlessly roamed the late-night subways singing “Manhattan makes it, Brooklyn takes it,” then rob their unlucky victim while others scrambled for their own safety. The subway lines even had names like the #2 (the beast), #4 (mugger’s express). As a night manger at a McDonald’s on Fordham Road in the Bron, I confronted such toughs, and knew that “one person can make a difference.” I organized a talented team of volunteers first named the “Magnificent 13”—with training in self-defense, careful procedures to make citizens’ arrests, un-armed group patrols, and bright red uniforms. The Angels’ history is different before and after 1993.

Before 1993. Through the 1980s in New York, the Angels quickly met with success in reducing crime, and grew rapidly to 600 volunteers. Sadly, Mayor Ed Koch

and the police union wrongly called us “vigilantes,” harrassed our volunteers, and I was arrested 76 times. At the same time, due to media adulation for our volunteer efforts, we were endorsed by many U.S. leaders, and became a model for other U.S. cities.

Since 1993. Things changed greatly when Rudolph Giuliani became Mayor of New York in 1993, immediately endorsing the value of the Angels, who were then able to diversify. At his request, Angels shifted to the City’s troubled housing projects, and started Junior Angels to focus on prevention in NYC schools. No one was patrolling the internet for predators, so the new CyberAngels did so, winning the national Points of Light Award in 1998.

Operations today. The Angels now have chapters in 140 cities in 12 nations, each headed by local volunteers—from Australia to Canada, Argentina to Japan. A complete list appears at www.guardianangels.org. Wherever crime is a problem, local citizens contact me for details, and receive information on installing an Angel chapter in their own area. Thanks to modern technology and policies, Angel operations today have become quite safe. Between 1979-1993, we had six deaths on duty (4 in New York, 1 in New Jersey, 1 in Los Angeles), and about 36 injuries, including my attempted murder by mobster John Gotti. Since 1993, injuries have been minor, and the Angels have never been sued. As the Angels approach their 30th anniversary on 13 February 2009, they have developed an effective formula which has become a model for community safety world-wide, helping concerned citizens to increase safety in their own areas.

**** Curtis Sliwa of WABC Radio in New York is the founder and President of the now-global Alliance of Guardian Angels. He is contacted through www.guardianangels.org.**

World Habitat Day 2008: New York City

On World Habitat Day 2008--Monday, October 6--cities world-wide hosted programs on this year's theme: "Harmonious cities," as detailed at www.unhabitat.org.

In New York City, the UN Habitat office and NGO Committee on Human Settlements joined to host two public programs: (1) a breakfast forum hosted by the Urban and Environmental Studies Programs at Fordham University, to focus on "Green cities" and New York City. (2) An afternoon forum in the United Nations Dag Hammarskjold Auditorium, focused on more global issues. These two forums brought together 20 regional experts, to focus on how New York City is pioneering new methods to promote harmonious cities, through collaboration of government, nonprofit organizations, and private corporations.

Forum: Green Cities of the 21st Century: Harmonizing Natural & Built Environments

While past cities have historically been linked with negatives (congestion, pollution, crime, cost-of-living, social disorganization), innovative new

technologies and policies now promise to reverse such negative trends for 21st Century cities. Innovators in this great City of New York now offer several models for sustainable cities of the future.

Welcome: Dean Robert R. Grimes, SJ (Fordham), Rosemary Wakeman (Fordham), Hon. Henry Stern (NYCivic), Branislava Balac (NGO Committee on Human Settlements).

Panelists: UN Habitat: Yamina Djacta, www.unhabitat.org

Designing green cities: Diana Balmori, www.balmori.com

Designing cities to fit people: Harold Takooshian, www.ngochs.org

Urban sustainability + green cities: Peter R. Walker, www.ngochs.org

Residential green building: Susan D.

Kaplan, www.batteryparkcity.org

Commercial green building: Louis

Nowikas, www.hearst.com

Green Campuses: Julie Newman,

www.yale.edu/sustainability

Urban transportation: Rick Sanford, *Instituto Qualivida*

Teaching sustainability: Sandra McKee, Colin M. Cathcart, www.fordham.edu

New metropolitan ecologies: Ellen D. Grimes, *School of the Art Institute of Chicago*

Some useful links to news about habitats:

www.unhabitat.org

www.yale.edu/sustainability/director.htm

www.fordham.edu/Campus_Resources/Public

Affairs/topstories_1318.asp

www.fordham.edu/campus_resources/public

affairs/inside_fordham/june_30_2008/in_foc

us_faculty_and/sapientia_et_doctrin_29992.asp.

www.nbm.org/programs-

lectures/programs/september2008/greening-the-worlds-capital.html

www.yale.edu/sustainability/director.htm



Barcelona 2008

At its 15th biennial meeting in Barcelona on 17 April 2008, International Architects Designers Planners for Social Responsibility (ARC*PEACE) hosted a session, "Are architects and planners obstacles to enabling housing strategies in low-income countries?" In this photo (l to r): Prof Dick Urban Vestbro of Stockholm, Dr Geoffrey Payne of UK, Dr Branislava Saveljic-Balac of New York, Prof Bijayanand Misra of Delhi and Kyoto. Architects and planners were called upon to re-commit themselves to enabling new strategies, to become part of the solution rather than the problem.



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