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ENGIME Conference on Multi Cultural cities:
Diversity, Growth and Sustainable Development

Contribution from the urban planning side
to the discussion on 19 November 2004, session 3:
Visible and Invisible Boundaries.

ACCOMODATING DIFFERENCES

By Elsbeth van Hylckama Vlieg
Secretary General of IFHP
International Federation for Housing and Planning

Urban Planning

- Spatial expressions of social processes

- All sectors of policy

Diversity, Growth and Sustainable Development

- Creation of physical conditions to accommodate social differences

- Processes that lead to segregation

- Planning as a counterweight

Similarities

- Similar basic human needs for living conditions

- Different circumstances to realise these conditions

Planning and Urban Design is always tailor-made

Similarity is the binding factor

Different Potentials

- Different access to urban resources,

- Spatial reflection of these differences

  - In land use patterns

  - In spatial behaviour patterns

- Planning creates better conditions

  - Special effort for those who have fewer opportunities

  - Regulate the free market in favour of quality for all

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Spatial Development Policies

- Improvement of existing characteristics

- Creation of new built up environment

- Promoting integration by general quality

- Differentiation of spatial expressions

  - Social or economical class

  - Lifestyles

  - Cultural identity

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Competitive cities

- Low conflict level

- Rich and varied cultural life

- Variety of life styles and cultures

Urban dynamics

- Continuous growth

- Inward and outward growth

- Keep inner cities accessible and alive

- Limits to growth

  - Sense of horizon

  - Density of habitation

  - Accessibility

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Network cities

- Medium sized urban nodes

- Compact multifunctional concentrations

- Open spaces

- Multi-modal connections

Unequal chances to the urban resources

- Scarcity for the lower income groups

- Less desired places suffer from a negative market pressure

- Vacancies emerge

- Segregation sets in

- Setting off a negative spiral

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Planning for diversity

- Identification for the different social groups

- Variety as an asset

- Respecting historical background

- Accommodating differences and demands of modern-day standards

  ▪ Social learning process

  ▪ Part of urban growth in general

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Globalisation

- Loss of commitment
  - Loss of social control
  - Lack of self regulation of behaviour
- Perceptual value degrading
- Mono-functionalism of economic functions
- Negative spiral and segregation

Long term perspectives and strategies

- Urban society must follow its own dynamics

- Horizontal broadening of planning strategies

  ▪ The private sector

  ▪ The NGO world

- Focus more on development processes, less on physical outcome

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The process of connection

- Row houses is better that high rise

- Multi-functionality is better that monofunctionality

- Public space needs to be safe and encouraging

Incentives for common action

- Horizontal coordination in planning policy

- Political will to deregulate and decentralise

- Mobilise people on the same interests

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Common frame of reference for quality

- Define values and build consensus

- Feeding by educational activities

- Incentive for community building

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Counterweight for divisions

- Rebuild our institutional public realm

  - Participation

  - Partnerships

  - Empowerment

- New ideas in collaborative arena's

- Use planning issues to get this going

Creating work through work

- Combine general growth tendency of cities with

  - Renewal of neighbourhoods

  - Social or political improvements

- Combine accommodating differences with

  - New building, restructuring, and modernising the city.

  - Clear urban development vision

  - Sustainable spatial strategy