



Dear friends,

More than three months have passed since the result of the 2011-2015 HIC President Elections was first announced. According to the *Presidential and Board Election and Representation By-Law*¹, November 26th was the deadline to present objections. Given that no objections have been raised, I will have the honour and the responsibility of assuming this new role within our Coalition.

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to the member organizations that have exercised their right to vote, for contributing to the strengthening of the democratic culture inside HIC. Secondly, I would like to acknowledge the serious and dedicated role the Electoral Committee has assumed during these long months, as well as the constant attention the General Secretariat Team in Santiago, Chile paid to the process. Last but not least, I send a very especial thank you to Davinder Lamba, the outgoing HIC President, for the work done in these past years and the quality of his participation in the elections. Together with the Wisdom Keepers, we will need their vast experience and guidance in the journey we have to face.

Both the votes and the numerous messages of congratulations and support that I have received from around the world during the past weeks –from members of social movements, civil society organizations, allied networks and platforms, representatives from foundations, cooperation agencies and UN bodies- represent an invaluable impulse and a enormous commitment for the work I have to do.

1) HIC President´s functions and responsibilities

As specified in the Coalition's founding documents², the HIC President's essential functions and responsibilities are to: chair HIC Board and General Assembly meetings; be up-to-date on HIC matters (including follow-up of HIC Board decisions, supporting fundraising, adequate management of available resources and a permanent evaluation); cultivate the HIC identity; represent HIC at the global level; contribute to the articulation of HIC members' experiences and actions with other partners and allies (in the World Social Forum and other relevant global and regional civil society spaces), for denouncing violations of housing and land rights and advocate for habitat policies.

As you may know, there is a relevant conjuncture that we have to consider and that will certainly be at the core of my concerns and actions at the short and medium terms. According to what was timely informed, the current HIC General Secretary, Ana Sugranyes, will end her 10 years-mandate by the end of 2013; this means that we have two years to initiate the delicate process of analysis and transition that this change will require. In that regard, strengthening a very active Board becomes an absolutely indispensable element, in which we will have to focus a substantial part of our efforts.

At the same time, there are no doubts that, regarding the changes and challenges in the external and internal context that I mentioned in my campaign statement³, the general framework for our reflections would be necessarily broader. For that reason, it has been proposed to conduct a new institutional evaluation (between May and October 2012) in order to review the strategies and ways of organizing the work within the Coalition. The Terms of Reference are now being discussed by the HIC Board and some collective decisions should be taken during the next few weeks. For this exercise to be truly democratic and substantive, we will need to take advantage of all the real and virtual means we have at our disposal to guarantee the widest possible participation and involvement of HIC members, friends and allies everywhere. I am convinced that the debates that could be organized at local and national levels (taking advantage, where possible, of the preparatory events for Rio +20) will provide us with the best opportunities to make a rich internal and external assessment on which to build the image of what we would like to be.

At this point, I would like to share some things I consider as fundamental elements to initiate exchanges and fluent communication between us.

2) Report of activities (completed in 2011, planned for 2012)

In the last four months of 2011, I took advantage of the already planned activities at the HIC-Latin America office (HIC-AL) to deepen debates and exchanges both with HIC members as well as with

¹ Complete document available at <http://www.hic-net.org/document.php?pid=2911>

² To see them all, check the specific section at HIC website: <http://www.hic-net.org/document.php?pid=3742>

³ English excerpt can be read at <http://www.hic-net.org/news.php?pid=3979>

representatives from the Latin American Secretariat for Popular Housing (SELVIP), Habitat for Humanity and the International Alliance of Inhabitants (IAI) in various countries:

- **September:**
 - **Cochabamba (Bolivia):** support to the organization and participation in a meeting with HIC members and representatives of the Housing Network of the Swedish Cooperative Centre, from Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Chile, El Salvador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay. We wrote a joint *Declaration*⁴ and agreed on a collective publication on social production of habitat and housing policies in Latin America (in press). We also had other coordination and follow-up meetings with the General Secretary, HIC-HLRN Board member (Alejandro Florián, FEDEVIVIENDA, Colombia) and other HIC members.
 - **La Paz (Bolivia):** participation in advocacy events and meetings organized by local HIC members to plan regional activities for the beginning of 2012.
- **October:**
 - **Barcelona (Spain):** in World Habitat Day, participation at the launching of a new publication on "The Right to the City" by Catalanian Human Rights Institute and the Observatory DESC (local HIC member), with a presentation on "The right to the city in Latin America"⁵. I also attended meetings with Engineers and Architects without Borders, with whom we visited the *Bon Pastor* neighbourhood (undergoing a "revitalization" process that has expelled many of its traditional inhabitants) and discussed the details of the social production of habitat exhibition they are preparing for the beginning of 2012 in Madrid.
 - **Sevilla (Spain):** by invitation from the Institute on Political Studies for Latin America and Africa (IEPALA), I participated at the 1st World Forum of Local Development Agencies and the 1st International Seminar on Development and Decentralized Cooperation⁶.
- **November:**
 - **Buenos Aires (Argentina):** meeting with Latin America alternate Board member (Carla Rodríguez, Occupants and Tenants Movement, Argentina), other local HIC members and representatives of IAI, to share information on the various ongoing capacity building and advocacy processes and to analyze opportunities and proposals for common actions during 2012, at regional and international levels (including references to Rio +20, HICademy and the Member Space, Urgent Actions Toolkit, among others). Leaders of the Land and Housing Federation invited me for an hour-long interview at their daily radio program to talk about the HIC vision and work on housing and habitat issues.
 - **Belo Horizonte (Brazil):** meeting with Latin America Board member (Dito Barbosa, National Union for Popular Housing, Brazil) and other local HIC members for information exchange and planning of 2012 activities (particularly in the context of the Thematic World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, 24-29 January, and the Earth Summit/Peoples Summit on Social and Environmental Justice in Rio de Janeiro, 20-22 June)⁷. I also had there the opportunity to connect with a representative of an organization associated with Slum Dwellers International (SDI), who informed me about their ongoing projects in Brazil, Bolivia and Peru.
 - **Santiago (Chile):** follow-up and coordination meeting with the HIC General Secretariat team (Ana Sugranyes, Shelley Buckingham y Marie Bailloux).
- **December:**
 - **Mexico City:** support to the organization and participation in the Mexican organizations' meeting towards Rio +20⁸ - as part of a national process we will continue to work on during 2012, with HIC members and local representatives of Habitat for Humanity and IAI.
 - **Regional:** following the proposals made by European and HIC-HSEN Board representatives, we launched the Regional Contest Towards Rio +20 on Right to the City, Sustainability and Good Living (*buen vivir*) in Latin America, in collaboration with Habitat Network, a Bolivian HIC member⁹.
 - **Canada:** organization of meetings with Wisdom Keeper (Barry Pinsky, Rooftops Canada), North America Board member (Nick Volk, Canadian Housing Renewal Association) and HIC-GS staff member (Shelley B.), as well as with university students and professors.

⁴ English version available at <http://www.hic-net.org/articles.php?pid=4056>

⁵ Based on the article included in that publication - only Spanish and Catalanian version available at <http://www.observatoridesc.org/es/publicacion-derecho-ciudad.html>

⁶ More information at <http://www.democraciaycooperacion.net/> y <http://www.foromundialadel.org/>

⁷ More information at <http://www.fstematico2012.org.br/> y <http://rio20.net/events/cumbre-de-los-pueblos-por-la-justicia-social-y-ambiental/>

⁸ Activity program and other related materials (Spanish only) available at http://hic-al.compuarte.net.mx/eventos.cfm?evento=1149&id_categoria=13

⁹ Call available (Spanish only) at http://hic-al.compuarte.net.mx/noticias.cfm?noticia=1150&id_categoria=13

For the first months of 2012 there are some activities already planned that will allow us to advance further on our strategic debates and shared planning exercises:

- **Mexico:** participation at the Oxfam-GB Global Urban Conference, where we have been asked to contribute with social production of habitat, right to the city and housing rights contents for their regional strategy for the coming years.
- **Bolivia:** planning meeting with HIC General Secretary, Board members, representatives from Red Mujer y Hábitat (Women and Habitat Latin American Network) and other HIC members from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Chile and Spain. We will also participate with other networks and academics in advocacy events with local and national authorities.
- **Spain:** participation at the 2nd International Seminar on Critical Education (Boaventura dos Santos and François Houtart have confirmed their attendance), the 4th Edition of the Master on Ethics and Public Politics for Democratization and Development, and the 3rd Workshop of the Forum on Democracy and Cooperation International Follow-up Committee (which, since 2002 and every two years, joins together more than 80 Latin American, African, Asian and European thematic networks). Among other issues, we will also take advantage of this events to review details of a collective project proposal for the EU (the conceptual note have already been approved).
- **Brazil:** support to the organization of events at the Thematic World Social Forum; support to the organization and participation at HIC Board and General Assembly meetings; participation at the Earth Summit / People's Summit on Social and Environmental Justice.
- **Italy:** support to the organization of HIC meetings and participation at the VI World Urban Forum. It is important to mention that, according to the request made by the Governing Council some months ago, UN-Habitat is initiating a consultation process with key actors for the definition of a Global Housing Strategy 2025 - with the assumption that a "need of a paradigm shift in housing policy and practice have become critical".

There are no doubts that it's only through paying careful attention to HIC member initiatives and commitments in all regions that we will be able to move forward in the construction of a strong a truly global Coalition. For that reason, I am already in contact with representatives of the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR) and other HIC members in Asia for planning my participation in some regional activities during the first semester of 2012. In that same sense, I would really appreciate having the opportunity to meet with HIC members and allies in Africa and Middle East as soon as possible; I then remain alert to your suggestions and proposals for the best alternatives at hand.

Up to this point, during the meetings as well as in the electronic exchanges I have had with HIC members, friends and allies in Asia, Africa, Europe, Latin America and North America, I have corroborated the motivation, energy and commitment to keep walking together. Recent strategic planning exercises¹⁰ indicate us the most urgent tasks that, under the coordination of the General Secretariat, we should undergo. As you will see in the table below (annex), I tried to synthesize the short and medium term actions and the expected outcomes according to the three HIC strategic objectives. I would like that every one of you feel as a relevant actor in this process, bringing your visions and ideas and contributing to generate a truly intergenerational and interregional dialogue about HIC past, present and future.

3) Communication tools and support for the Presidency

The possibility of maintaining a permanent and fluent communication with all members is, of course, a crucial element for management, especially within an international network such as ours. In that respect, I count on the support of HIC-GS in Santiago for the design and update of some concrete tools, as:

- New e-mail address: hicpresident@hic-net.org
- New HIC President electronic newsletter (3 per year, in English, Spanish and French);
- HIC President election blog: <http://president2011.hic-net.org/>
- New section on HIC Presidents at: http://www.hic-net.org/es_presidents.php

At the same time, I invite you to take note of my current skype address (lorenahical), which I will continue to use for chats and virtual meetings with members, friends and allies from all regions.

As you know, this is the second occasion that HIC President and HIC-AL office are located in Mexico City at the same time. I share the concerns some of you have pointed out in the sense that this fact represents a weakness in terms of our capacity to build a stronger motivation and openness to

¹⁰ Particularly the *ArthICulation* workshop held in Barcelona, Spain on July 2010, and specific sessions during the Board and General Assembly meetings in Dakar, Senegal on February 2011. Based on that, a new version of HIC mission and strategic objectives is now available and will be widely circulated in the few coming weeks.

new leadership to assume management responsibilities in this and other regions. One of the fundamental objectives during my mandate will be to work very hard on this.

Taking into consideration the agreements made at the various meetings with colleagues of the HIC-AL team (Enrique Ortiz, Maria Silvia Emanuelli, Blanca Hernández, Claudia Hernández, Norma Aguilar, Ramón Rodríguez, with the occasional contributions of Joel Audefroy and Noé Pineda), HIC members from Mexico and other countries, we will work during the coming months in the adjustment and redistribution of responsibilities and tasks in order to be able to continue to attend the national and regional dimensions as well as incorporate the new ones related with the HIC Presidency. In that sense, and while having the results of our internal reflection and debate process as well as the recommendations of the institutional evaluation by the end of 2012 at our disposal, we are already promoting initiatives with members and allies for a more decentralized management – through the formulation and implementation of local/national projects containing regional and even international activities and products.

Being the first woman to assume this position within our Coalition opens up a big number of expectations and implies no few personal and collective challenges. I count on wisdom and energy from you all to be able to face them.

Fraternally,
Lorena Zárate
HIC President

ANNEX

Strategic lines	Short and medium terms objectives	Expected outcomes
a) Strengthening of the Coalition	<p>1.- To elaborate, debate, agree and implement a financial sustainability strategy (including a broader conception of the resources, as well as guidelines for projects and concrete initiatives);</p> <p>2.- To elaborate, debate, agree and implement an institutional sustainability strategy (including review of current structures and ways of organizing work within HIC, as well as the design of systematic spaces for a stronger exchange between members and regions, a bigger representation of the diversity, intergenerational dialogue and leadership capacity building);</p> <p>3.- To actively involve HIC members, friends and allies in the use of the available electronic tools (HICademy, Member Space, etc.) and debate the need of design new ones;</p> <p>4.- To involve HIC members, friends and allies in the ongoing processes to move forward on gender and environmental mainstreaming.</p>	<p>Recommendations from HIC institutional Evaluation.</p> <p>Review of HIC Constitution.</p> <p>Review/elaboration of specific guidelines (elections, regional and thematic structures, etc.).</p> <p>Formulation of institutional and financial strategy (for a 5-10 years period).</p> <p>Formulation of specific projects for the support and development of local, national, regional and global initiatives.</p> <p>Implementation of HICademy and Member Space.</p>
b) Strengthening of social processes and actors	<p>1.- To consolidate/deepen/develop (professional, technical, political) support to organizations and communities affected by land, housing and habitat related rights threats and violations, seeking stronger direct interaction between members;</p> <p>2.- To consolidate/deepen/develop (professional, technical, political) support to organizations and communities working in the implementation of their human rights related to land, housing and habitat, seeking stronger direct interaction between members;</p> <p>3.- To consolidate/deepen/develop HIC articulation role within global platforms and networks working on human habitat and housing, through the promotion of concrete initiatives;</p> <p>4.- To consolidate/deeper/develop articulations and alliances with social movements, thematic networks and platforms (human rights, <i>campesinos</i>, indigenous people, women, youth, etc.), focusing on concrete initiatives that bring elements for critical review and rearrangement of countryside-city relationships.</p>	<p>Permanent update of Urgent Actions HIC-HLRN Database.</p> <p>Elaboration of letters, statements and other solidarity and support joint actions.</p> <p>Systematization and dissemination of self-help experiences – against violations and for the implementation of human rights related to habitat.</p> <p>Update and deepening of conceptual, political and programmatic debate on social production of habitat, right to the city and housing rights.</p> <p>Organization of joint events and campaigns (particularly around World Habitat Day and within World Social Forum processes).</p>
c) Lobbying for public policies	<p>1.- To recover/build/consolidate HIC and other allied network's role as critical and relevant stakeholder <i>vis à vis</i> multilateral, global, regional and national institutions responsible for the definition and implementation of housing and habitat public policies and budgets;</p> <p>2.- To update, debate, agree and disseminate a collective critical position paper regarding climate change (including its impacts on vulnerable communities, as well as access to technology, materials, and</p>	<p>Review HIC relationship with UN-Habitat and other relevant international and multilateral institutions that orientate housing and habitat policies.</p> <p>Organization of campaigns and joint events (including the World Urban Forum and other relevant multilateral and official spaces).</p> <p>Formulation of a collective position paper regarding climate</p>

	<p>other prevention, mitigation and adaptation means; and a deep review of our production, distribution, consume, final disposal and reutilization patterns);</p> <p>3.- To update, debate, agree and disseminate a collective critical position paper regarding "development" megaprojects and its impacts on human rights (particularly on most vulnerable communities);</p> <p>4.- To explore new technology's use and impact to make known/connect our visions and proposals to/with a broader public.</p>	<p>change and proposals to move forward the environmental mainstreaming, both at internal and external level.</p> <p>Formulation of a collective position paper regarding impacts of megaprojects.</p> <p>Communicational global strategy formulation (including reshaping of current HIC-WITNESS project).</p>
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