

Questions the Forum will address

The Forum will seek to define both the tangible and intangible aspects of human solidarity by probing the shared values that promote it by asking:

1. What are the shared values of humanity that generate community bonds and social trust, the bedrock of healthy human settlements?
2. Can these elements be identified, measured, quantified?
3. Can these elements be incorporated into the continuing process of successfully planning, building and rebuilding urban communities for the next century?
4. Can human solidarity bridge the gap between human needs and sustainable natural environments?
5. Can human solidarity create the conditions necessary for people to live together as good neighbours?
6. Can we - by marshalling local, national and international efforts - realistically hope to achieve it?
7. Can we create an acceptable code of behaviour celebrating our global diversity and our common humanity? What would be the essential elements of such a code?

Under the guidance of the Moderator, Mr. Robert MacNeil, the individual participants will present their own points of view and engage in a cross-cultural discussion intended to be spontaneous, informal and provocative. The audience of invited guests will be drawn into the discussion as time and opportunity will allow.

Upon the Forum's conclusion a succinct statement reflecting diversity of viewpoints as well as emerging consensus will be prepared for consideration by Committee II of the official UN Conference.

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Second UN Conference on Human Settlements, Habitat II

FORUM ON HUMAN SOLIDARITY

A Spontaneous Conversation

'The City Summit' is more than a conference. It is a recognition by the international community... an awakening, if you will... that time is running out on us, that if we want to save the future, we have no choice other than to find answers today. The problems now facing our cities and towns are a serious threat to local as well as national stability, a threat to global peace.

Wally N'Dow
Secretary General
Second UN Conference on Human Settlements
Habitat II
1996

CIRAGAN PALACE
Istanbul, 8 June 1996
9.30 am - 5.30 pm

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Participants

Human Solidarity, a Force that Builds Community

Name	Country	
Dr. Ruth Cardoso	Brazil	Brazil's First Lady
Mr. Charles Correa	India	Eminent architect/planner
Dr. Ihsan Dogramaci	Turkey	President, Bilkent University
Mr. Millard Fuller	US	President, Habitat for Humanity Int.
Dr. Farkhonda Hassan	Egypt	Member of Parliament, Prof. of Geology
Hon. Teddy Kollek	Israel	Former Mayor of Jerusalem
Dr. Benjamin Ladner	US	President, American University
Dr. Phyllis Lambert	Canada	Eminent architect/heritage planner Canadian Centre for Architecture
Dr. Federico Mayor	Spain	Director General UNESCO
Hon. Billie Miller	Barbados	Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs
Dean James Morton	US	Dean, St. John the Divine
Mr. Aryey Neier	US	Open Society Institute
Chief (Mrs) Bisi Ogunleye	Nigeria	National Coordinator, Country Women's Association of Nigeria
Dr. Arthur Schlesinger Jr.	US	Eminent social historian, Prof. Emeritus in the Humanities
Dr. Ismail Serageldin	Egypt	Vice President, The World Bank
Mrs. Vandana Shiva	India	Director, Foundation Technology & Natural Resource Policy
Mr. Maurice Strong	Canada	Secretary General, Earth Summit, Rio 1992
Dr. Rajesh Tandon	India	Participatory Research Society in Asia
Mrs. Gorel Thurdin	Sweden	Deputy Speaker, Swedish Parliament
Mrs. Simone Veil	France	Ancien Ministre d'Etat
Robert MacNeil	Moderator	MacNeil/Lehrer PBS Newshour
H. Peter Oberlander	Coordinator	

The city is humanity's most vibrant creation, a living organism that pulses with our hopes, inspirations and failures; it reflects our diverse personalities and our most powerful emotions. Indeed, if there is a common denominator in the world of today - an experience that people all over share and that, in a sense, unites them - it is to be found in the unique interrelationship that exists between a city and its people. Both are caught up in an historic and dramatic transition that is the mark of our rapidly urbanizing planet, a planet on which human solidarity may be our only salvation.

The future of our human settlements - from hamlet, village to city or megalopolis - will not be determined by 'bricks and mortar' alone.

More housing is needed and rebuilding decaying infrastructure is essential - the litany is a long and familiar one. But for all we do about it, the malaise that now eats at the heart of our cities, will not disappear unless we also pay attention to the urban soul, unless we advance the human solidarity that transforms the built environment into human - and humane - settlements.

History, geography and social change create the context for human solidarity; rational processes build cities, but faith, loyalty, honour and trust among its members create communities. Beyond 'bricks and mortar', cities and towns need social capital as a basis for a civil society essential to individual and collective prosperity and satisfaction.

Human solidarity is based on shared values that generate community bonds and social trust, the bedrock of healthy human settlements.

- Can these elements be identified, measured, quantified and incorporated into the continuing process of successfully planning, building and re-building urban communities for the next century?

- Can human solidarity bridge the gap between human needs and sustainable natural environments?

- Can it create the conditions we need for people to live together as good neighbours?

- Can we realistically hope to achieve it?

Solidarity among people is the sense of cooperation that arises from common responsibilities or interests, from a community of attitudes and values. Despite differences of class, race or religion, it is the common daily needs that impel people to work together. Nowhere is that human cooperative spirit more needed than in the cities of the world. Urban life demands human solidarity to survive and to balance social, economic, environmental and political demands. Individual freedom and creativity foster a synergy of intense human interaction.

If urban life demonstrates the highest achievements of human solidarity, urban life may also threaten it. Humanity at close quarters is most creative but also most vulnerable. The strains of propinquity, vast disparities in wealth, housing, sanitation, nourishment and health care can be destructive; moral relativities make the urban soil ripe for crime and disease; with continuing environmental degradation cities breed as much human misery as they do human glory. Cities represent a unique human achievement; they are our longest surviving artifacts and greatest challenge to the 21st century.

Urban life and the solidarity it engenders, has always been able to contend with change. Historically, cities have been both the cause and effect of change and have often successfully absorbed the consequences. But the rate of change has increased so dramatically as to push cities into crisis. New skills of adaptation to change will be needed to convert crisis to opportunity.

Solidarity allows people to move in the same direction based on the sense of shared humanity, linked by common goals beyond individual nation states. Communities are often fragmented and narrowly motivated; human solidarity is inclusive and healing. Focusing on human needs allows a consensual community to emerge. It is in the world's human settlements where solidarity can be achieved, nurtured or destroyed.

Humanity has needs that only the city can provide. The forum will explore how the city - and the ever growing part of humanity that depends on it - can survive and how human solidarity, necessary for that survival, can be stimulated and nurtured.