

INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF INHABITANTS

c/o Unione Inquilini, via Bettella, 2/ter - 35133 - Padova - Italie

tel. + 39 049691771 - fax +39 02700415592 - email : info@habitants.org - www.habitants.org

Progress report #6 – The Popular Fund for the right to Land and Housing

Non-payment of debt and the redirection of funds into housing and basic public services

By Sidiki DAFF

Date: 22 January 2007

Participants: In addition to a hundred or so representatives of social organisations and delegates from sixteen countries, the following figures attended the seminar organised by the IAI and the Forum of Local Authorities: Cesare Ottolini, coordinator of the International Alliance of Inhabitants; Patrizia Sentinelli, the Italian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs; Kenyan representatives of the 'W Nairobi W' campaign; Paul Maquet Makedonski, a committee member of the campaign for dignified housing, Jubileo, Peru; Pina Rozzo, vice-president of the Province of Rome, Italy; Patrick Jarry, mayor of Nanterre, France; Antonio Blanco Cueto, president of the Province of Malaga, Spain; representatives of the FAL; Yves Cabannes, Coordinator of the United Nations Advisory Group on Forced Evictions (UN-AGFE), GB; representatives of FAMSI; representatives of the Forum for Outlying Local Authorities; and Riccardo Moro, of the Justice and Solidarity Foundation, Italy.

Notes:

International Seminar: The Popular Fund for the right to Land and Housing World Social Forum 2007, Moi Stadium, Nairobi, Kenya. 11 IN Lower, 22 January 2007, 11.30.

Major financial players, Northern states and their accomplice states in the South must pay the social debt. The payment of debt service, the drastic structural adjustment policies imposed by the big financial players, the scandalous liberalisation of the economy, the state's disengagement from public services and its social regulatory role and ministerial misappropriation of monies intended as repayment for the debt has all conspired to create a social gap, and contributed to the spread of poverty. There is a lack of even the most basic public services, and this situation must be rectified by major financial players and governments.

Indeed, with policies linked to payment (adjustment plans, cuts in social budgets), there is mounting insecurity in the housing domain all over the world. Yet it's not due to a lack of money because, where debt is a problem, non-payment can in fact provide a solution, provided that the decision not to pay serves as a pretext for a union of civil organisations, local authorities and progressive governments. This union then proposes that social debt repayments be channelled into housing and basic public services.

In this way the Italian government accepted the IAI's proposition to convert Kenya's debt, putting the money into social policies which will help poor people.

Decentralised cooperation must be viewed as a unifying advantage in the fight for the non-payment of debt and the constitution of a solidarity fund for the right to housing and land; we must see it as facilitating the development of innovative, transparent policies in partnership with civil society and governments. In this sense we salute the engagement of the Municipality of Nanterre, which has come forward to assist the IAI in this struggle.

This debate also took place among the members of the FAL, and those present were informed of this major IAI activity.

Decisions:

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The urban social organisations and local authorities that came together for the World Social Forum in Nairobi in 2007 made the following declarations:

1. In numerous countries, housing, environmental and urban problems are at the total mercy of market mechanisms and of the mechanisms of supply and demand, thanks to official policies which favour large property magnates. In such situations, those with low incomes are forced to live in marginal zones, unable to find adequate accommodation.

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2. Faced with this, we believe it is indispensable to propose and put into practice alternative housing policies which will stop the suffering endured by millions of the most vulnerable people.

3. We must bring together the policies and experience of grassroots social organisations and local governments in order to formulate plans, housing programmes and systems which will provide realistic and practical solutions.

4. Urban social movements, the International Alliance of Inhabitants, local authorities, progressive governments and anti-debt movements must form a permanent international forum which, based on common ideas and principles, will encourage the exchange of experiences and work towards the creation of national and local funds for housing provision.

5. Such funds must come from national budgets and property taxes; they should also come from monies associated with decentralised cooperation, and from the cancellation of foreign debt.

6. These funds must be administered in a transparent manner, with the assistance of grassroots social organisations. They must be channelled through people-oriented microcredit institutions, as part of housing initiatives conceived and put into practice by local governments working in tandem with grassroots social organisations. This must be achieved using participative assessments and other democratic instruments of town planning.

References to other documents:

Involved: Inhabitants; local collectives

Location: Worldwide

Themes: Cancellation of debt; Access to basic services; Right to Housing; International Cooperation

Related articles:

Links:

- [La participation des habitants au FSM 2007](http://fr.habitants.org/article/articleview/1816/1/500/)
<http://fr.habitants.org/article/articleview/1816/1/500/>
- WSF Web TV: [International Alliance of Inhabitants: Seminar on Zero Evictions Campaign 22/1/07](http://wsf.ifl.it/it/movies/list/56?category=Evento)
<http://wsf.ifl.it/it/movies/list/56?category=Evento>
- [Campagne, effacer la dette pour loger les pauvres](http://fr.habitants.org/article/articleview/1443/1/378/)
<http://fr.habitants.org/article/articleview/1443/1/378/>
- [Towards a Popular Fund for the right to land and housing](http://www.habitants.org/article/view/1151/)
<http://www.habitants.org/article/view/1151/>
- [Effacer la dette pour loger les pauvres: à Nairobi l'expérimentation est à présent possible](http://fr.habitants.org/article/articleview/1765/1/347/)
<http://fr.habitants.org/article/articleview/1765/1/347/>

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