



Cancun Communication

30 NOVEMBER 2010



POSITION OF THE UIA MADE TO THE COP 16

With this **Communication** made at the 16th Climate Change Conference of the Parties in Cancun, Quintana Roo Mexico, the International Union of Architects is **expanding and reinforcing the UIA Sustainable by Design Strategy** we released at the 15th Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, Denmark in December 2009. **We are committed to making our world Sustainable by Design and to ensure that architects take a responsible attitude.**

Climate change is a reality, its negative effects on weather events have been felt since the end of the last century and the beginning of this 21st century and at least in the short and medium term these will not change, on the contrary, they will get more complicated. On this occasion **the architects of the world within the UIA, feel the need to again take a position within the international community** to express our points of view and our commitments for action to reduce this problem.

Acknowledging that in the political field the only ones who can and must act immediately are the governments of our states:

- I **We summon you, the governments, at this COP 16 meeting, to decide and to agree an International Treaty on Climate Change.** This is required to be at the highest legal level with the signing ratified by the legislatures of each country, where all are fully committed so that the hand of man can stop polluting and destroying the propitious environment for life and to stop stimulating perniciously the current natural process of climate change; and when they do so, that the parties take the side of humanity rather than the side for commercial or industrial consortia that could cause harm.
- II **We believe that we, the civil societies of our countries, should also do our part,** so that together with our governments we can all stop harming the environment, affecting the quality of life and help to mitigate the negative impacts of climate change, by adapting intelligently to new circumstances, especially, so that we can force ourselves jointly to avoid compromising the future of coming generations.
- III **We believe that architecture should combine social and cultural creativity, innovation, scientific and technological knowledge with more emphasis on available resources,** so that with responsibility and intelligence, we can achieve "sustainable architecture" because the goal will always be to achieve the best quality of life for all.
- IV **We commit together with universities, scientific and research institutions and general architectural education institutions to adapt our knowledge and professional actions,** so that we can respond successfully to the new circumstances in the shortest time possible; and we will recommend an immediate review of plans and programmes for the teaching of architecture in order to adapt these so that the new architecture professionals with their specialties can be prepared properly for the new global practice.
- V Responding to the social conscience that will have to prevail to deal with the problem seriously and effectively, **we are also committed to promote** in each country to each government and through their own professional, commercial and trade associations:
 - i **The establishment of "Public Policy" regional standards,** adapted to the new circumstances, whilst reviewing existing ones, and to promote the "New Law" necessary with appropriate regulations for all specialties of architecture and construction, **emphasizing the sustainable improvement of:**

- a) Urban and Regional Development
- b) Mobility and Urban Structure
- c) Land use
- d) Housing and urban communities integration
- e) Building
- f) Public areas, public and national Parks
- g) Risk zones
- h) Environmental Impacts
- i) New environmental Technologies and the use of alternative energy sources.

ii "Zero Tolerance" for:

- a) Projects proven that would damage the environment and that do not ensure the restoration of the negative impact,
- b) Projects that involve excessive expenditure of energy or that are negative and which seriously affect their surrounding context.
- c) Speculation in urban and suburban land that leaves large gaps in these areas, adversely affecting the cost and efficiency of infrastructure and the challenge of waste management, disrupts the urban structure, affects mobility, wastes valuable resources such as water and energy, and creates sprawl that is unsustainable,
- d) Legal and illegal settlements in areas exposed to high risk,
- e) Inefficiency and / or corruption.
- f) Mass housing projects without proper infrastructure and amenities grouped in such a way that they resemble concentration camps more than urban ensembles,
- g) Inappropriate design and construction for earthquake, hurricane, tornado, tsunami, and nearby volcano areas, subject to flooding and to landslide zones,
- h) Projects involving the destruction of jungles and forests, reefs, mangroves, natural topography, without proper restitution in cases that may occur;
- i) Projects that radically could alter the natural flows of streams and rivers without a beneficial purpose,
- j) Projects that may cause uncontrolled environmental pollution in all its forms both during construction and after completion.

VI We live in the era of mobility and due to repeated alien models in architecture and town planning, without having sufficiently examined or assimilated with regional and local cultural conditions in many cases in different parts of the world, serious errors that adversely affect the environment are being committed, mainly in cities, affecting the quality of life of the majority and producing inappropriate hybrid models with negative repercussions for the environment. **We promise to raise awareness of these problems for communities and their authorities** through regional professional associations, governments and commercial organizations.

VII Due to the speed of technological development in the world, to emergencies in the construction process and mainly to ignorance, the value of traditional technologies and materials that have been used since time immemorial is often underestimated, and sometimes forgotten. These kind of forms and materials can often be the most appropriate solutions for comfort and for energy savings, in cities and especially in the countryside and rural areas. **We propose that the rescue and adaptation of technologies and materials traditionally used** in traditional cultural regions in the world, **be applied in the appropriate places**, and avoid the indiscriminate use of industrial technologies in rural areas and the countryside where these cannot be maintained or sustained properly.

UIA COMMITMENT

Everything that we do is about people. We must ensure through adaptation and mitigation, **that people have better cities and a better quality of life made Sustainable by Design** and that all architects and other related professionals are **much more responsible in the future**. Architecture can make the difference.



Louise Cox AM, UIA President