

Ten questions posed by the Scientific Committee to the XXI World Congress of Architecture

a responsibility in facing global problems

The XXI World Congress of Architecture UIA Berlin 2002, meeting at the dawn of the 21st century, had as its intention to remind architects, engineers, and planners in all countries that they have a joint responsibility to help resolve the global problems mankind will face in this new century.

The 21st century marks the beginning of the end of the industrial age as we have known it so far, as the successes and progress achieved are undermined by severe conflicts :

- the domination of capital over labour
- the pursuit of growth and prosperity to the detriment of the environment
- the purely rationalistic approach to science and technical progress
- the inequitable distribution of wealth.

These factors have proven to be inhumane and prone to crisis. They are on the verge of foundering under the weight of their own inherent contradictions.

The time has come to do away with these contradictions and bid farewell to one-sided Modernist paradigms. A dialogue between cultures, incorporating due respect for their long-standing traditions, must lead to the elaboration of new principles that view mankind not as the ruler of the cosmos, but as a part of it.

The approach to planning and the architecture of Modernism reflect the structural forms of this era that will soon be replaced by another.

Architecture as a resource is a concept that forges a relationship with history and nurtures the hope that mankind can live in harmony with nature.

The participants in the XXI World Congress of Architecture were called upon to make a stand, to demonstrate a political commitment, and to produce innovative solutions. Essentially, this is a slight rephrasing of the much-used slogan "Think globally, act locally".

following in the footsteps of the united nations

The XXI World Congress of Architecture UIA Berlin 2002, following the path traced by the major conferences held by the United Nations, proposed that the resources of architecture should be used to meet the demands addressed by these conferences and UNESCO, in particular at its General Assembly of November 2001. With this in mind, it called for a dialogue between cultures, civilisations, and disciplines.

- The Congress made reference to :
- The Environment Conference in Rio de Janeiro (1992)
- The World Population Conference in Cairo (1994)
- The Conference on Human Settlements in Istanbul (1996) demands made by the World Heritage Centre.

The UIA World Congress provided an opportunity to continue the debate on cities in the 21st century, which began with the Urban 21 Global Conference on the Urban Future that was held in Berlin in the year 2000.

The XXI World Congress of Architecture UIA Berlin 2002 hopes to have contributed a number of building blocks to the new global peace policy, long since called for by Klaus Töpfer, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, for the benefit of humankind, the environment, and cultures.

Question 1

On what moral values does the responsibility of those substantially involved in planning and building rest ?

Question 2

Which keystones for a new global peace order can architects offer through their architectures ?

Question 3

How can the ecological costs of the built environment be internalised in economic efficiency more than has previously been done, while observing their global effects ?

Question 4

How can innovations in architecture build on traditions and the history of construction ?

Question 5

How can regional identity in architecture, economy, and society be perceived as an added value, and how can it be continued in a modern guise ?

Question 6

How can beauty in architecture correspond to contemporary content and assume a timeless shape ?

Question 7

How can the social value of planning as a holistic way of thinking, in relation to independent decisions and individual buildings, be increased ?

Question 8

How can sustainable, resource-saving construction contribute to a greater degree of social justice ?

Question 9

In what ways can planning and building protect material resources and increase the spiritual resources of beauty and identity ?

Question 10

How are architects to take a stand when political changes are required, but when the realities of planning and building take the same old form ?