

# ISOCARP STATE OF THE PROFESSION 2006

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## I A WORLD OF CITIES

At the beginning of this new century, we are experiencing some of the most profound and accelerated transformations in the history of humanity that are affecting the economy, politics, society, and the human habitat.

These processes of globalization are leading to the closer interaction of countries, cities and peoples of the world. This phenomenon has been facilitated by the innovations in information technology and the enormous reduction of costs of transport and communication, and by the breaking down of barriers that restrict the flows of goods, services, capital, knowledge, ideas, and peoples across borders.

Our cities are in the centre of these processes. When ISOCARP was founded in 1965, about one-third of the world's population lived in urban areas. By 2025, this figure will have doubled, with the main urban growth happening in the developing world. This is an immense global challenge for planners.

Although globalization have produced many important benefits, a "great fracture" has also emerged in our cities and our countries; between those that are integrated in this new economic order, and those that are not.

Many cities, especially the mega-cities in developing countries, are experiencing the very harsh counter-effects of globalization. The new urban landscape is not only that of shiny skyscrapers, luxury homes, five-star hotels, convention centres, private clubs, and new airports ... it is also the landscape of poverty.

We can see an urban landscape of growing social segregation – the digital divide – the worrying emergence of terrorism, violence and insecurity, new barriers in the urban space, the growing reliance on private security systems in high-income residential districts, in public buildings and in commercial centres. This segregation and polarization of wealth and poverty, particularly in larger cities, is a key issue that we face as planners and citizens, and is the topic of research and discussion at the 2006 ISOCARP Congress in Istanbul.

I believe that cities have a major role in contributing to the sustainability of our planet. Indeed, they are the key spaces for social cohesion and against the fracture of globalisation. Building a sustainable future for our planet requires us to build bridges of

knowledge, trust and solidarity between the developed and developing worlds. As planners, if we want to be relevant in the future, we need to be active leaders in this process of building a sustainable future.

## II ISOCARP – FOUR DECADES OF KNOWLEDGE CREATION & SHARING

ISOCARP is an international association of planners in a global world of cities. For over decades, we have been committed to helping our cities and regions become better places to live, work and play. We have members from over 70 countries who have been involved in some of the most innovative planning projects and urban initiatives.

For over forty years, ISOCARP has been leading topical planning issues of global relevance at our annual Congresses and Seminars. These constitute a wealth of knowledge and experience which is fundamental to understand the state of our profession.

Another important landmark in ISOCARP is the “State of the Profession” speech by the out-going President. These speeches, inspired directly from knowledge, ideas, concerns and dreams of planners from around the world, summarise the evolution in planning ideas over ISOCARP’s history.

**Sam Van Embden**, Founding President from 1965 to 1975, was ahead of his time in defending mixed-use development instead of urban sprawl. He criticised the rigid application of the Athens Charter and believed in the talent and capacity of innovation of planners.

**Gerd Albers** (1975-1978) advocated better cooperation between planners and researchers. He thought that planners need to focus on physical planning and maintain the double loyalty to their client and people affected by their plans.

**Lanfranco Virgili** (1978-1981) attributed to planners a broad field of action. He initiated ISOCARP Guidelines for multi-disciplinary training programme because he recognised that planners need the skills to lead multidisciplinary teams.

For **Derek Lyddon**, (1981-1984) planning meant “making rational use of land, specialising in the craft of synthesis, and revealing forms through visual images,” and the job of planners is to produce “a vision of the shape of place which responds to the territorial imperative for spatial identity.”

**Manual da Costa Lobo** (1984-1987) found it important to learn from the past for planning to be of better service for people, especially in the developing world. For him,

imagination, education and sustained dialogue are necessary for planners to operate at the human level.

At the end of the Cold War, **Karl-Otto Schmid** (1987-1990) saw that planners would have to reconcile unprecedented opportunities with instability and uncertainty. In this new environment, both generalist and specialist planners were needed.

**Javier de Mesones** (1990-1993) believed in developing a strong professional ethic. Planners have to decide and act upon their conscience and not be influenced by fashion, and should seek leaving a legacy of an honest and competent contribution to urban and social development.

**Haluk Alatan** (1993-1996) the first ISOCARP President from a developing Country, and put a special emphasis on the digital divide, and the responsibility of ISOCARP and planners in general to contribute to meeting the challenges of natural disasters and the fracture of globalization.

**Serge Domicelj** (1996-1999) felt that in responding to ever broader requirements, some planners have lost their focus. He conceived two new promising departures: planners could become "reformers" through advocacy planning or be "synthesisers" by acting as human strategists.

**Max van den Berg**, (1999-2003) saw "Interactive Planning" as an opportunity to combine forces and means of different partners of the society and to extract hidden financial resources, unexpected knowledge and creative ideas.

## IV TERRITORIOS INTELIGENTES

We are experiencing dramatic changes in human activities, the economy and our societies. We need to re-invent urbanism and discover new instruments. We need to learn from the past and go beyond traditional planning. We need to expand our disciplinary boundaries and explore new horizons.

I believe that at this historical moment, our challenge as city and regional planners is to develop our capacity to transform any place in the world into a "*Territorio Inteligente*." These are cities and regions that are able to achieve a balance between economic competitiveness, environmental sustainability and social integration.

I would like to share with you some concepts that, in my opinion, characterize "*Territorios Inteligentes*":

### **1. *Territorios Inteligentes* are designed by the Community.**

The free market is an excellent instrument to regulate the economy and to stimulate the creativity and productivity of companies. However, it is not an efficient mechanism for the organization of the city.

*Territorios Inteligentes* are cities or regions with coherent leadership, a mature civil society and a high level of inter-institutional collaboration. They are cities or regions that have active communities with the ability to organize themselves in order to invent and reach a collective vision for the future.

### **2. Environmentally Sensitive and Responsible**

Concerns for environment have become globalized. The effort made by cities and regions in environmental issues is important for the quality of life of its citizens, as well as for its impact on economic competitiveness and image of the city.

Natural spaces are resources shared by the entire population, and they have an important impact on social cohesion. Thus, *Territorios Inteligentes* are committed to leaving for future generations a better environment than the one they inherited.

### **3. Capable of Creating Competitive Advantages**

Cities are attractive and have magnetism not only because of their intrinsic conditions, but also because they have been able to come to a consensus for the development of an intelligent vision for their future.

The most important challenge for the survival of our cities and regions will be the capacity to educate, attract and retain highly-skilled human resources. .

Regional and local governments can contribute effectively to the competitiveness of the companies working in a given city and the quality of life for its citizens. They can do this by adopting "intelligent urbanism."

#### **4. Committed to Social Cohesion and Development**

*Territorios Inteligentes* are cities or regions that work to achieve social cohesion and balance, that is to say, the "inclusion" of every citizen. At the same time, they struggle against inequality and "exclusion" of persons and groups.

The dynamism of the civil society is essential to achieve a balanced and "inclusive" city; this is partly because the effort to obtain a socially integrated city cannot be made only by public authorities. The democratization of the urban planning process will be an effective mechanism against exclusion and in favor of social development.

#### **5. Have Effective Structures for Governance.**

*Territorios Inteligentes* are cities or regions that have efficient administrative structures or have coherent agreements for inter-institutional collaboration for the design and construction of the future of the city-region.

They are also able to create appropriate organizations (social architecture) for the development of strategic projects or to reach specific objectives. This can be achieved through political leadership, public-private cooperation, entrepreneurial spirit and creativity.

#### **6. Intelligent Relationship with the Surrounding.**

We are facing new territorial scales that require the invention of new planning approaches: the megacity regions (supercities), global intergration zones, polycentricism, city-regions, metropolitan areas, micropolitan zones, innovation hubs, etc.

The keys for the design of *Territorios Inteligentes* are often found in its specific urban context. Over the recent decades, three critical issues have arisen:

Firstly, the global scale of urban interrelationships. Many cities have found a profile based on their roles in the global context : Singapore as nodal port and airport, Boston as center for higher education, Miami as the "meeting point" between the USA and Latin America

Secondly, the emerging opportunities for cities to define new roles in relation with neighboring cities. This is especially relevant in Europe where there is a long urban tradition and an interesting system of historical settlements, and where city-systems are becoming a reality. There are emergent opportunities derived from:

- complementary urban profiles of cities within the city-system
- strengthening certain economic, cultural or social connections
- polycentric urban structures
- development of supra-municipal functions
- inter-relation of cities with the rural system and natural spaces.

Thirdly, the emergence of the city-region around the principal metropolis offers tremendous and complex opportunities.

The future of cities will depend increasingly on their ability to identify this vocation of the city in relationship to the surrounding environment. This is much more complex today than in the past and underlines the importance of defining an Urban Profile in a world of opportunities and interaction.

## **7. Committed to Innovation.**

The most innovative and successful companies in the international markets devote much time and effort to R&D activities. In a similar way, cities and regions will be able to successfully meet future challenges through the research and the design of innovative urban strategies.

Innovation is the most efficient way of creating sustainable competitive advantage. The key to urban innovation is people, therefore strong infrastructure for education and research is fundamental for innovation in the city.

Innovation Hubs located in the city-region form part of the "eco-system" of innovation: encouraging inter-disciplinary dialogue, fusion of cultures, ideas and integrated economic sectors.

## **8. Connections to City-Networks.**

Cities are nodes that participate in networks that are increasingly powerful and interconnected. The most global and better-connected cities are the gateways to the global economy.

Just as in private companies, universities, R&D centers and people, cities also need to establish intelligent links and strategic alliances in order to achieve their objectives in this era of globalization.

Cities without a vision for its future will find it difficult to identify the specific alliances that they need. They will also find it difficult to form the strategic links that will give them access to the innovations and experiences in specific areas in that the city needs improvement.

## V NEW HORIZONS BEYOND PLANNING

The urbanism for this new century is not a zero sum game.

The traditional way on relying on funds from the municipal budgets will have very limited effects on the transformation of the city. However, with a clear strategy for the future, with visionary leadership and the capacity for collaboration among the different actors of the city, the possibilities for the transformation of our environment are multiplied.

This is the “magic” of urbanism: the capacity of elected leaders to activate the private sector and the organised civic society in the direction of a shared intelligent project.

In the stage of the globalization, all cities – small, medium or large – are going to build their competitive advantages by emphasizing their local identity and strengthening their global connections.

The most attractive cities of the future, will not only be those that enjoy some geographical or historical advantages but they will also be cities that have strategic visions for the future based on their components of excellence. Urbanism can play a key role in the creation of competitive advantage.

Each city has its own components of excellence that we need to discover and strengthen. These inter-related components make up the city’s “Cluster of Excellence.”

The “Cluster of Excellence” connects the past and the future of the city, and is the “backbone” of the urban profile of the city. It is the basis of the competitive advantage of the city, and the key to its future success and sustainability. In a world of hyper-competition, the only projects or initiatives with the capacity to create competitive advantage are those based upon the strengths of the city, inspired by the idiosyncracies of the place, and on its “Cluster of Excellence.”

The search of excellence is not confined exclusively to cities in the developed world. Cities less economically developed can also reach similar levels of coherence and balance.

Today, more than ever, as planners, we must assume an even greater role: to go beyond planning, from advising to leading the real transformation of our cities and landscapes. We need to understand the value that we planners can create for cities through research and creativity.

Dear ISOCARP members and friends, I wish to conclude with the following thoughts:

I do believe that planners are creative and highly-committed people. I am convinced that we have the capacity to understand our cities. I am also convinced that we have the capacity to invent a coherent future for our cities. If we believe in the power of ideas, we must believe in the power of planners to improve our cities and to transform our small planet. Change begins with leading ideas, and as planners, we have the responsibility and the capacity to lead the global challenge of building a sustainable future.

I wish you the best in this wonderful journey. Thank you.

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