INTRODUCTORY REPORT TRACK 1A2:

RAPID URBANISATION: DON'T POSTPONE AT HIGH SPEEDS: SOCIAL INCLUSION, CULTURAL AND ECOLOGICAL CONSERVATION

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This track contains papers on a diversity of topics related to planning in a rapidly urbanizing, modern world. The papers are distributed in three groups on the three mornings of the congress. The distinct groupings deal with broad issues of sustainability in planning, cultural heritage conservation, the dynamics of the housing markets and social inclusion as well as with the importance of quantitative techniques in planning – all under the circumstances of growing at high speeds.

The ideas cover a wide range, yet the underlying theme cutting across the papers on the one hand is the need on the part of planning and planners to understand the real needs of, and plan for the end users of the city. And on the other hand the idea of reintroducing the sentiment of social, environmental morality and social justice. Truly, around the world, the profession of planning is passing through stormy waters and is being tested and challenged as these aspects need to be managed.

Session 1: Integrated planning and quantitative methods to ensure social justice, ecology and livability

The largest number of papers addresses this theme. This is in itself an indicator of the loss of confidence reposed in the planning schemes all over the world where planning is seen as in direct conflict with the goals of sustainability. This group of presentations starts with two papers in a diverse context yet similar in their consequence with a case in Ghana, faced with the stark reality of poverty and disorder and a case in China providing for high rise flats without the people's involvement. The same conclusions are drawn from the inconsiderate approach of planning which in the end is running the risk of producing projects that fail to meet the needs of the users. The next set of papers highlights the two extremes, one of the non-commitment and one of an over-commitment of the local governments. One is from the Tkwini municipality from Natal, almost *demanding* social justice from the planners and the other is bringing out the paradoxical phenomenon of extravagant planning by international planners for the locals in the twin cities of Dubai and Abu Dhabi highlighting the traumatic situations that planning is passing through.

The former Soviet countries have their own specific challenges and the dilapidated housing stock for all it is worth is still a major planning recourse available to the planners. One paper explores the

need to streamline the planning system for the sake of energy management in worn out housing of Ukraine.

The metropolis of Delhi on the other hand is still struggling to find the planning technique best suited for the administration and growth of this mega city. The shift from the 'controlled development' to 'process-based planning' paradigm in Delhi is pushing the same agenda of integrating and linking planning with real life situations on the ground.

Quantitative techniques for better planning and living
A few papers are emphasizing the importance of quantitative techniques in planning for high-speed urbanization. As is usually the case in a systems analysis driven probe, the danger of overkill always lurks in the background. However the end results in almost all cases justify the situation on the ground and the suggested proposals only highlight the thematic values of the spirit of the entire congress i.e. do it fast, do it right.

A paper from China presents the case of planning for a 'healthy' lakes concept applied to a district with several lakes and the threat to the survival of all the lakes is real. A paper from Nigeria with a case of Lagos tackles the issue of employment in a low income neighborhood of a poor country. The concerns pointed out are universal in nature and the suggestions made apply to many other countries: to give permit to the urban poor to operate from home based work places. That in the end may be similar in nature to the return of the concept of land use mix which is echoed in many other papers. The experience from Khartoum, implementing the land use laws supports the same spirit of social justice and employment of the poor. The last papers one being a case in Turkey and another transforming public spaces in Chennai indicate the need for an assessment of techniques and trends for more harmonious and meaningful planning.

Session 2: Planning for social inclusion and appropriate housing supply at high-speeds
All over the world the property market has become the driving force in the field of urban development. In some countries it is more dominating than in the others, depending on the level at which the property market props up the development policy and the direct involvement of the policy makers. In almost all countries the property market is linked to power, corruption and hindrance to ethical planning principles. Four case studies demonstrate this very clearly.

A paper on Queensland highlights the conflict of a well intentioned planning body and the ever changing rules and regulations that render the provision of housing difficult and push the reformatory ideas in the background. A case study of the periphery of Mumabi brings out clearly the loss of identity of the settlements lying on the fringe of a large Metro. This shows a real need to plan for the periphery of large metro cities of the world. The case of Delhi's unauthorized housing settlements highlights in a different way that if planning agencies become indifferent to the planning issues concerning the weak and the vulnerable, the whole situation deteriorates to give way to economic benefits of some vested interests. The socio cultural consequences of such failures are far too well known.

Session 3: Cultural heritage conservation and public art as added value to planning at high speeds

Papers from different countries underline the importance of the preservation of heritage and the contribution of public art to improve the livability of residents. The paper on the contribution of art to improve the livability in Carnissalande opened the path of making public art an integral part of planning and engaging citizens to completely identify with the art pieces and the program. A case in Greece is warning of future damage if early warnings are not heeded. In Singapore the recycling of brown field heritage sites turned into industrial parks shows the business approach to planning within a strong institutional setting of planning and implementation in Singapore. The paper illustrates the importance of managing the scarcity of land as a resource in a small city-state like Singapore carefully and of applying land conservation policies early.

A paper on conserving heritage sites in China illustrates three variations on the theme of i.e how it is done, how it can be done and how to involve people doing it. This is not to say that the task of conservation in China is any easier than elsewhere but it is the author's way to induce sensitivity in the official machinery to promote heritage conservation.

A paper from Istanbul illustrates the principle which is being applied almost all over the world, where housing developers entice prospective housing owners through imagery projecting that of cultural heritage.

During rapid urbanization it seems that finer details are often not considered. The challenge of young street children, especially in the developing world, growing up in poor, crowded, unsupervised social contexts is tackled in another paper. A case study from Egypt with the provocative title of 'wild urban design' is actually an advocacy for the street children of Cairo addressing their needs. Also here the same idea applies and this time sustainable landscape is being used to keep street children out of trouble which points to a more informed approach to planning. All papers warn about the need to place heritage above blind or motivated urban development goals on a path of no return.

In all of the above cases the hesitating initial involvement of the concerned Government agencies indicate that a gradual awakening of planners and policy makers on these issues is taking place.