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Low Carbon Cities - 45th World Congress, Porto Portugal 18-22 October 2009 Spatial Planning for Low Carbon Cities

ISOCARP's 45th World Congress was held in the immediate run up to COP 15, a vitally important UN meeting in Copenhagen which is charged with reaching agreement on ways of reducing world greenhouse gas emissions. Thus it was well timed to focus attention on the potential role of spatial planning in addressing the causes and effects of these rising emissions, now established as the principal cause of climate change. A joint effort by ISOCARP and the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Porto, this event attracted some 350 delegates drawn from over 57 countries from all over the world. This Statement presents some important conclusions from the Congress.

The Congress was addressed by six keynote speakers, comprising: Paul Taylor, Chief of the Office of the Executive Director, UN HABITAT; Jean-Pascal van Ypersele, Vice Chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change; Eduardo de Oliveira Fernandes, President of the Energy Agency of Porto; Richard Rosan, President of the Urban Land Institute, Washington, D.C.; Mah Bow Tan, Minister of National Development, Singapore; and Jacqueline McGlade, Executive Director of the European Environment Agency. These presentations were complemented by three parallel technical seminars in which 16 further papers were given, and by five workshops addressed by a further 100 speakers.

As was confirmed by the speakers and participants, the necessary action to tackle the causes and effects of climate change will pose major challenges for the world's countries. Those effects are already clear. They are evident in the massive shrinkage of polar ice, the retreat of most of the world's glaciers and the rising sea levels that threaten many of our larger cities. They are manifest too in the extreme weather patterns and events that are afflicting different parts of the world, for example the devastating droughts in Kenya and in south eastern Australia or the sheer force of the hurricanes in the Caribbean

Much of the necessary action will take place at the level of the city where over half of the world's population now lives. Because they concentrate people and activities, our cities place a particular burden on energy and other resources. Also, in many countries, they are the places which have attracted the poor and the most vulnerable, whose settlements often lie directly on the land that is most susceptible to flash flooding and the effects of sea level rise.

At the same time, the cities are an obvious part of the solution. The world is, of course, a very diverse place and what will be appropriate for the cities in any one world region may differ from what will be the right path in another. For example, should the emphasis in any one place be on adaptation, on mitigation, or on a combination of the two? Also, how should cities be shaped and designed in detail so as to become more efficient in carbon terms?

These matters were the subject of much debate over the four days of the Congress. A clear outcome of the many contributions to the Congress is that spatial planning, a form of planning that seeks to influence the distribution of, and investment in, activities such as housing, transport and water management in a co-ordinated way, coupled with urban design, can contribute significantly to climate-proof cities and a carbon neutral built environment. And action oriented planning on these lines will help secure a better quality of life for those who live and work in our cities.

In his concluding remarks to the Congress, the General Rapporteur, Chris Gossop, extracted seven ingredients, or building blocks, that taken together, could help move us towards the low carbon cities of tomorrow. These are set out in the accompanying Statement from the Congress Team, **Seven Ingredients for Low Carbon Cities**. They envisage a substantial role for planning and design.

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ISOCARP stands as a United Nations accredited body representing urban professionals worldwide. Its members, in more than 70 countries, work at the cutting edge of practice and research in planning matters and, as revealed at the Porto Congress, they are key custodians, and at the forefront, of a growing body of knowledge and experience related to action in climate change adaptation and mitigation.

ISOCARP, therefore, urges world leaders, through their deliberations in Copenhagen and, in the intensive work that will follow to develop what is agreed there, to acknowledge and stress the proven links between urbanization and climate change, and the consequential increasingly important role for urban professionals in policy development and implementation across all human settlement scales and all levels of governance.

ISOCARP looks forward to play an important role in a global action plan designed to achieve the low carbon cities which were the focus of our Porto Congress in October 2009.

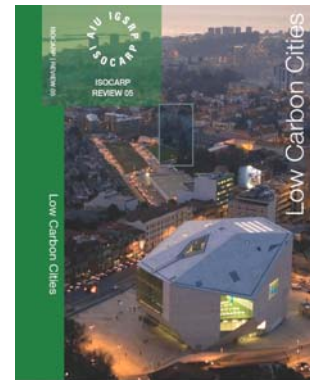


Ismael Fernandez-Mejia
President ISOCARP

Review 05

A specific outcome of the Congress is Review 05, a 260 page book on the topic of Low Carbon Cities. This contains numerous case studies of low carbon approaches in different parts of the world. They range from the global to the local and include perspectives from UN HABITAT, the European Environment Agency and individual cities such as Portland, Oregon, Cambridge, UK and the host City, Porto.

Review 05 is available from the ISOCARP Headquarters, The Hague (isocarp@isocarp.org) at the price of Euro 30 plus postage.



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ISOCARP

International Society of City and Regional Planners is a global association of experienced professional planners. It was founded in 1965 to bring together recognised and highly-qualified planners in an international network. The ISOCARP network comprises individual and institutional members from more than 70 countries worldwide. As a non-governmental organisation ISOCARP is recognized by the UN, UNHCS and the Council of Europe.

The Society also has a formal consultative status with UNESCO.

For further details about ISOCARP, visit www.isocarp.org



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Seven Ingredients for Low Carbon Cities

a Statement from the ISOCARP Congress, Porto/Portugal (19-23 October 2009)

ISOCARP's Porto Congress on Low Carbon Cities generated many rich ideas. The Seven Ingredients that follow represent a distillation of these and a possible 'route map' towards the low carbon cities of the future. The views of the Congress Team, made up of the chairs and rapporteurs of five parallel workshops, under the leadership of Chris Gossop as General Rapporteur provided a vital input.

1. **Urgency, Leadership and Vision** *Given the compelling scientific evidence about rising greenhouse gas emissions and the acute dangers to our future of continuing on the present path, this requires:*
 - A clear lead and direction from the world leaders attending Copenhagen COP15;
 - Arising from that lead, commitment and concerted action in all world regions and at all levels to move towards a low carbon future in which the well being and security of the human and other species are optimised;
 - At the practical level, the identification and the sharing of knowledge about low carbon and adaptation approaches that have been shown to work, building upon these as the mainstream for tomorrow;
 - A recognition that the move towards a low carbon future must begin very soon, and that it will need to endure for decades, even generations, requiring a long term vision.

2. **Strategies that are tailored to reflect the particular responsibilities and needs of countries in the developed and the developing world** *This means:*
 - For the developed nations, a commitment to secure, by defined stages, reductions of at least 80% in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050;
 - For the fast industrialising developing countries, a commitment to progressively greater energy efficiency and to low and zero carbon development;
 - For the poorer developing countries, an emphasis on new planning approaches, including adaptation to protect the vulnerable;
 - An avoidance everywhere of carbon intensive developments.

3. **A three strand approach embracing public policy, changing behaviour, and technological innovation - a key stimulus in each case being carbon pricing.** *This means:*
 - In terms of public policy, setting the framework for action at the various levels, in terms of targets and monitoring, carbon pricing, and other fiscal and regulatory measures including spatial planning;
 - Changing behaviour on the part of individuals and organisations through raising awareness and the setting of an appropriate price for carbon sufficient to stimulate a market for low carbon goods and services;
 - Technological innovation, through increased investment in research and development and stimulated by carbon pricing.

4. **Public policy development at all levels** - from the international down to the level of the city neighbourhood and individual project. *This means:*
 - At the higher levels, the setting of frameworks for strategic action, including targets and monitoring methodology;
 - At the city and regional levels, a new emphasis on effective spatial planning and development control;

5. **Integrated, inclusive planning** – of cities, regions, and human settlements generally *This means:*
- Spatial planning policies that integrate land use, transport, energy and waste planning, that take into account biodiversity and species conservation concerns as well as the efficient management of water resources, and that embrace all three aspects of sustainability, the social, the environmental and the economic;
 - Planning strategies that seek to secure reductions in greenhouse gases reflecting the commitments that are agreed nationally and internationally, and that embrace adaptation measures appropriate to the local needs and circumstances;
 - An emphasis on the compact city embracing higher densities (but not necessarily high rise), mixed uses, a structure that embeds efficient, integrated public transport, a defined and protected system of open space, and a defined urban edge to prevent sprawl;
 - Planning strategies for cities that are in the context of those for the wider region and extend to the rural hinterland;
 - As part of a move away from wasteful, centralised energy generation, a new emphasis on energy planning at the city and neighbourhood scale.
6. **Carbon Conscious Design** *This means:*
- Energy efficient, resource conscious cities, neighbourhoods and individual buildings;
 - Moves towards new development that is energy generating, and that can export low carbon power to other local areas;
 - Climatic design that borrows, where appropriate, from regional and local traditions and the lessons that can be learned from historic urban patterns, traditional architecture and the focus on making use of trees in public spaces;
 - Places that are well connected and accessible, as appropriate by public transport, by bicycle and on foot and that have reduced dependence upon the car;
 - Places that are biodiverse, and where networks of open space and landscaping, and opportunities for food growing, are fully integrated with the built environment.
7. **Delivering Low Carbon Cities** *This means:*
- A commitment to climate change adaptation and mitigation policies, energy efficiency measures and greenhouse gas reduction becoming an integral part of land use, economic, housing and transport policies at all levels of governance;
 - A commitment to the implementation of spatial planning and other laws and by-laws at the local level;
 - The establishment of innovative organisational and funding arrangements to deliver and manage the necessary action programmes;
 - The fostering of regional co-operation (formal or informal) between municipalities in terms of spatial planning and other programmes;
 - The training of planners and other officials in the techniques of incorporating low carbon policies into spatial plans and other sectoral policies, and improving the awareness of local politicians concerning these issues.



Chris Gossop
General Rapporteur



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