



International Society of City and Regional Planners

Geneva
40th
World Congress



Introduction

By Charles Lambert, General Rapporteur

A lively format for the Congress:

Plenary Sessions, Parallel Sessions, a very special Joint Forum, the first Mayors' Summit

With its 2004 Congress in Geneva, ISoCaRP will bring together highly experienced professionals, such as planners, urban stakeholders, economists and politicians, as well as national and local city officials. During the course of this four-day conference, the aim is to draw up joint recommendations on the management of urban regions against the backdrop of the controversial phenomenon of globalisation.

Urbanisation is one of the major issues of the 21st century. The forces that drive it tend towards concentration. Consequently, they risk causing an unimaginable and unsustainable growth of large cities, where life is already highly selective and often cruel. They risk further accelerating the spread of cities in the shape of sprawling sub-urbanised areas. Furthermore, they may make matters worse for many already disadvantaged areas, which could spell disaster at the human, cultural, social and environmental level.

It does not need to be this way. In each context, we, as urban planners seek to ensure that existing and future urban regions enjoy economic prosperity, employment, equity, social inclusion and cultural diversity. We are also committed to the local and global sustainability of the urban environment. Several interesting trends already experienced in some parts of the world are producing urban regions which act as urban systems based on strategic planning and partnership.

The concerns of the ISoCaRP 2004 Congress in Geneva are also those shared the Committee on Human Settlements of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. This Committee meets annually in Geneva with the participation of high-level officials from its 55 member countries. At the Congress, they will participate in a special half-day Joint Forum. They will discuss the management of urban regions seen from the local perspective, with the challenging and important question of the closer links that need to be re-established between urban planning and public housing policies.

The Joint Forum aims to stimulate dialogue between those responsible for public housing policy and professional urban planners, and to close this International Congress with concrete management recommendations to create urban conditions that are suited to the local level.

The ISoCaRP Congress is an ideal setting to invite mayors from innovative cities around the world to discuss the major challenges and opportunities that cities face in the 21st century. The Mayors' Summit will help bring our members into direct contact with top urban leaders from around the world, thereby increasing the influence of ISoCaRP in shaping our cities.

It is hoped that the fact that the 2004 Congress will be held in one of the most symbolic international locations for mediation and peace – Geneva – and that it shares the same outlooks as the UNECE Committee on Human Settlements will promote synergies between those responsible for the future of cities and urban regions.