

Villes en développement

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Exclusion and Urban Poverty

Among the many aims of development aid policies, poverty alleviation is of central importance. It has found expression in different ways over the past 40 years but it remains a goal whose legitimacy no-one disputes.

To meet this goal, structural policies were the first to be used, with the provision of infrastructure, economic growth policies and institutional development. In this context, French Development Aid has promoted and supported strategies prioritizing urban development, in the belief that cities are anchorage points for developing economies within the world economy, key places for creating economic, social and cultural wealth. Recent thinking on the part played by local government areas in globalization has confirmed the soundness of this intuition – for global competition is also local competition. This is borne out by the success of some countries (Mauritius is an obvious example), but also by the many failures in Africa, Latin America and South Asia.

With the revival of strong growth in developed countries over the past ten years, the gap is widening between the situations in these countries and in the poorest countries. This harsh fact is challenging many ideas and is prompting more in-depth examination of

human development and territorial development problems in widely varying contexts.

The discussions during the one-day seminar held on 7 September by AdP highlighted:

- the existence of economic analyses that are relevant but need to be directed towards a broader sample of cities,
- the importance of a capacity to analyse and develop policies on scales relevant to local government areas, in this case, cities,
- the close link between the quality of local democratic debate and the success of local development strategies.

There is no doubt as to the urgency of poverty alleviation, but only a combination of highly-motivated municipal teams and local, or even foreign, technical and financial support, will enable strategies to be implemented that truly benefit each and every inhabitant of an area. ■

François Noisette
*President of the Association
de Professionnels - Développement Urbain
et Coopération (AdP)*

The housing policy and poverty reduction approach in India, Brazil and South Africa

Alain Durand-Lasserve, CNRS

Urban poverty is primarily the result of the unequal redistribution of resources and produced wealth. It is worth calling to mind this obvious fact which tends to be masked by the discourse emanating from international institutions.

The extension of districts described as informal or, by some, as illegal, is worsening the economic situation of poor households by preventing or discouraging them from investing. That is why security of land tenure and neighbourhood amenities are central issues in poverty alleviation policies.

Integration of informal settlements and alleviation of poverty: the example of India, Brazil and South Africa

India, South Africa and Brazil have an economic weight, a form of administrative organization and a negotiating capacity that make them comparatively insensitive to external pressures and enable them, at least partially, to defy the urban management models suggested by development aid agencies and international financial institutions.

Despite major differences in their histories, political traditions and administrative practices, there are some similarities in these three countries, both in the public authorities' approach to urban poverty and in the solutions provided by housing policies under poverty alleviation programmes¹.

All three countries have a decentralized power system (a federation in Brazil and India, extensive decentralization in South Africa). The comparatively autonomous system of the federated States and the local

authorities has enabled them to implement a wide variety of solutions under their housing and poverty reduction policies.

Another of their characteristics is the existence of civil society and active grassroots associations, with real democratic debate on land and housing access and poverty alleviation. For each of these countries, I will just highlight a few housing policy priorities that I consider innovative for the alleviation of poverty.

India: providing secure occupancy and neighbourhood amenities

Early in the 1970s, the integration policy for "irregular" neighbourhoods was key to poverty alleviation. It combined land security policies and the provision of neighbourhood amenities. In 1972, the Programme for Environmental Improvement of Urban Slums was implemented in several large cities with central government financial support, and it was then extended to all Indian cities with aid from the States. Over two decades, 40 million people benefited from this programme.

In recent years, the Indian Union's strategic housing policy guidelines² have focused on three principles: (i) guarantee secure occupancy for inhabitants of irregular settlements, (ii) promote in situ regularization of illegal settlements, and (iii) provide people in these districts with the basic urban services considered

vital for alleviating urban poverty. The Indian Constitution (74th Amendment) recognizes the responsibility of the Union States and the Municipalities in implementing these policy guidelines according to their means.

The 1999 National Slum Policy on informal districts referred to the fact that "The poor represent an extremely important element of the urban labour force and contribute substantially to total productivity and labour market competitiveness. It is vital that all ULBs (Urban Local Bodies) recognise the contribution of the urban poor in helping to build urban prosperity and make sufficient provision for them to have access to affordable land, house sites and services. The present planning and development framework is exclusive of slums and informal settlements. It views slums as "problem areas requiring corrective action".

From the wealth and variety of Indian experience, I will select just two aspects.

The first is the decoupling of the regularization of settlements from the provision of facilities. The fact of officially identifying a district as a slum entitles it to facilities, whatever its land status. This is a particularly innovative aspect of the Indian poverty alleviation policy.

The second concerns the grant of leases to occupants of some irregular settlements for the land they occupy. One of the

most groundbreaking and progressive pieces of legislation in this field was the Act adopted in Madhya Pradesh in 1984. It is known as the Patta Act. In the slums that have developed on public land, this Act authorizes the grant of a lease (for 15, 20, 30 years or more) for plots of less than 50 square metres. The lease is not transferable. The aim is to give poor occupants of irregular settlements the minimum security essential to the improvement of their economic situation, by enabling them to invest, which is key to helping them break the poverty cycle. Land titling is not considered a priority. The provisions of the Act override all other zoning provisions, urban planning regulations and the building code.

Recent developments, including market pressures, suggest that at present, this housing-based integration policy is being called into question.

Brazil: constitutional principles put to the test

The importance of the Brazilian experience lies in the major innovations introduced by the 1988 constitution. This constitution covers the general relations between the housing policy and urban poverty, and declares housing production to be the joint responsibility of the Federal State, the States and the Municipalities which must "promote programmes for the construction of housing and the improvement of housing and basic sanitation conditions" and "fight the causes of poverty and the factors leading to marginal living conditions, promoting integration of the underprivileged sectors" (Art 23, IX and X).

The most important innovations introduced by the 1998 Constitution are (i) the establishment of a limit to the concept of private property (ii) the relaxation of rules of acquisitive prescription to the benefit of low-income urban groups and (iii) recognition of the participatory management concept. I will just deal with the first two points³. Although property ownership – considered as a basic principle of the economic order – is reaffirmed in the constitution, it is not an absolute right. It must have a “social function”. In other words, it cannot be adduced in cases where its enforcement would adversely affect the situation of the poor and lead to their exclusion. It is the task of the municipalities, whose vital role is reaffirmed, to assess the situation. However, owing to the lack of a legislative, regulatory and tax framework, and to the open opposition of an urban elite, these provisions have so far only had a limited impact on the housing policies implemented by the municipalities.

The other innovation of the 1988 constitution is the relaxation of rules of acquisitive prescription: usucapiao (Art. 183). This concerns the integration of districts occupied by squatters (favelas) on private land (public land is excluded). Land tenure can be regularized after only five years' continuous occupancy of a plot no more than 250 square metres in size. Here again, the implementation of this measure is no easy matter owing to long-drawn-out procedures, the reluctance of the judiciary power to prejudice private property rights, and the inadequacies and indeterminacies of the legal framework.

South Africa: the perverse effects of home ownership promotion

The Republic of South Africa is without doubt the country

where the will to use the land and housing policy as a means of integrating underprivileged urban populations has been defined with the greatest care and where considerable human and financial resources have been mobilized to facilitate this integration. In practice, the implementation of this policy is proving difficult.

The 1994 constitution reaffirms two principles: the right of ownership and its inviolability. The difficulties encountered in implementing a land and housing policy for the poor are the result of the ambiguities and practical consequences of the inviolability concept, in a historical context marked for several decades by a harsh policy of dispossession and exclusion of non-white people, culminating in the apartheid policy. However, this situation (which results from the 1992-1994 constitutional negotiating conditions, which were favourable to the white urban elite) is changing. Property protection now seems to be an increasingly eroded concept. For example, the 1998 Act, which protected inhabitants of illegally occupied land from being evicted, or the 1998 Act on land tenure security⁴.

The policy of huge subsidies for the building and improvement of housing and infrastructure in the mid 1990s was intended as an instrument of social integration and poverty alleviation⁵. But it has not measured up to expectations. Its weakness lies in the fact that subsidies can only be allocated to households with real land rights. This excludes the lowest-income groups, squatters, and tenants or occupants of land to which a customary claim is made that is disputed by the authorities. Moreover, in regularized settlements equipped with amenities, the cost of services is not affordable by the poorest households, who then have no choice but to leave the neighbourhood. Tying the housing policy and poverty alleviation to the adjudication of real rights to the occupants of land does not benefit the poorest segments of the population.

A few lessons learned from Indian, Brazilian and South African experiences.

- In India, South Africa and, to a lesser extent, Brazil, there is a growing contradiction between the will to combat

poverty through the housing policy and a **neo-liberal economic policy** which, through its short-term effects, tends to exclude the poorest people from access to land and housing.

- **Economic growth** is the key factor in the success of anti-poverty policies, irrespective of the strategies evolved by the States. Below a certain threshold, housing policies cannot support anti-poverty programmes effectively. The comparative success of India – or more precisely some States of the Union – is explained by their dynamism and the relative improvement of the jobs and income situation.

- The **constitutional recognition of the right to housing** is an important element in poverty reduction policies. In India, the recent ruling of the Supreme Court against inhabitants of irregular neighbourhoods in Delhi is an interesting negative example. Despite a strong political will to integrate poor districts, the lack of any constitutional recognition of the right to housing leaves irregular settlements at the mercy of legal rulings that run counter to social policy objectives defined at the central and local level. Yet

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in a less favourable context, the constitutional recognition of the right to housing (or the recognition of this right as a fundamental right) affords the urban poor in Brazil or South Africa some degree of protection against eviction.

- **the relaxation of the urban planning and building regulations** is also important for integration and urban poverty measures. In India, the fact of declaring a district to be

a slum enables planning and equipment override measures to be implemented. In Brazil, options such as Special Urban Development Zones or Special Social Interest Zones enable amenities to be provided in a district and its inhabitants to be protected against arbitrary eviction, even where the recommended measures or the planning options run counter to some urban planning requirements. ■

1. A number of these issues are presented and discussed in: A. Durand-Lasserve & L. Roston "Holding their Ground. Securing Land Tenure for the Urban Poor in Developing Countries" (to be published in March 2002, Earthscan, London, 288 p).

2. (i) National Housing Policy Plan, 1994; (ii) National Housing and Habitat Policy, 1998; (iii) National Slum Policy, 1999.

3. On the last point, see Villes en Développement, No. 52.

4. Prevention of Illegal Eviction from and Unlawful Occupation of Land Act, 19, 1998, and Extension of Security of Tenure Act, 62, 1998.

5. The subsidy may amount to 16,000 rands per household. It is allocated to companies in the formal sector in charge of housing improvement work and facilities.

Poverty, a few definitions

Violaine Courmont, urbaniste

The definition of poverty is changing: the purely monetary approach is being supplemented by concepts that seek to give a more accurate picture of the extent to which populations are excluded.

Monetary poverty

The poor are defined as individuals or households with an expenditure level below a threshold. This threshold corresponds to the cost of a minimum basket of wage goods and foodstuffs (on the basis of daily energy requirements).

The poverty line or lines separate the poor or the very poor from the non-poor. The proportion of the population below these lines gives a measure of the depth of poverty.

But the construction of a poverty line is always arbitrary especially since many aspects of well-being do not involve monetary transactions, which is why the concept of essential goods has been introduced.

"Basic Essentials" Poverty

The United Nations define a Human Poverty Index (HPI)

based on non-monetary criteria, consisting of ten unsatisfied basic necessities (NBI) including access to housing, drinking water, schooling, sanitation, or a right to living accommodation with a minimum of square metres per person.

A new definition

The World Bank 2000 report goes from the lack of goods – monetary or essential – to the lack of ability to choose, the possibility to choose being considered as the essential factor for well-being. This approach is based on the concepts of security, empowerment and opportunity.

• Security

The concept of security raises the question of the vulnerability of the poor to risks of all kinds (ill health, economic dislocation, and natural disasters). The poor are the most vulnerable to these events which thus form aggravating factors of poverty.

• Empowerment (integration, demarginalization)

Empowerment refers to relations between the poor and

the institutions. Judicial corruption and the misappropriation of public funds weaken poor people still further. And the absence of activities that show active participation in community life (voting, belonging to an association, reading a newspaper) say a great deal about poverty and marginalization.

The integration of the poor will require targeting a better supply of public services towards them, developing citizenship participation and decentralizing towards the municipal level.

• Opportunity (capabilities, capacities).

This concept (cf. work of Amartya Sen, 1998 Nobel Laureate in Economics) also addresses the link between the individual and the rest of society, this time via his relational capital. The deterioration of this capital may cut the individual off from possible aid or opportunity, may adversely affect his dynamism and his ability to respond, and may ultimately make him lose all hope and feel excluded.

Exclusion

Poverty is thus increasingly perceived from the angle of exclusion, which defines the poor person as somebody who does not have the means to participate in the activities of the community to which he belongs or to attain the most widespread standard of living in society.

This social exclusion is explained not only by a lack of financial resources but also by a low standard of education, lack of access to information or an inability to establish social links.

It results in fewer opportunities to gain access to the job market, benefit from public services and participate in public decision-making processes. ■

Proceedings of the workshop «Exclusion and Urban Poverty», september, 7, to be published.

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Poverty and urban exclusion

Close up on Madagascar

Nicolas Widmer, Head of Project Decentralization in Madagascar, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

A better insight into urban exclusion issues and coping strategies will be given by a close-up view of Madagascar, particularly through the strategic development experiences of French Development Aid, which has been supporting interventions in Malagasy cities for many years.

There have been three main phases in this development: **The first phase**, from 1960 to the 1990s, was characterized by technical development which, to put it simply, went from the SDAUs (land use plans) to urban management.

The second phase, which can be taken as the period from 1990 to 2000, was marked by an increase in support for municipal governance.

During this 40-year period, our urban cooperation thus evolved from technical and urbanistic support to municipal governance support.

The change was from urban planning to the need to release funds to carry out this planning, and from the improvement of financial and accounting management to the need to secure more revenue through fiscal and parafiscal census-taking (land, markets, etc.) while retaining a highly technical approach, with projects implemented by the Municipality of Tana or the Ministry of Land Use Planning and the City, and with mainly technical input.

The aim was to improve management in order to build local development capacities, by strengthening the role of the commune (communes with an elected executive and deliberative authority were reintroduced in 1994-95), establishing its role as a development leader, building the capacities of its staff (training, dissemination of technical documents, etc.), improving its knowledge of the local situation, equipping it with office

automation and data processing systems, and providing technical aid through training, audits and advice.

This aid package produced some good results in terms of revenue (in the commune of Mahajanga, revenue increased from 274 million Fmg in 1995 to 5 billion in 2001).

Per capita revenue progressed strongly in all the communes (including Antananarivo).

Similar progressions are to be expected for small towns in which French Development Aid has financed further fiscal censuses, with the potential result of an increase in land revenue of more than 300%.

Urban development aid, catalyzed by the strengthening of the communal institution, has entrusted poverty

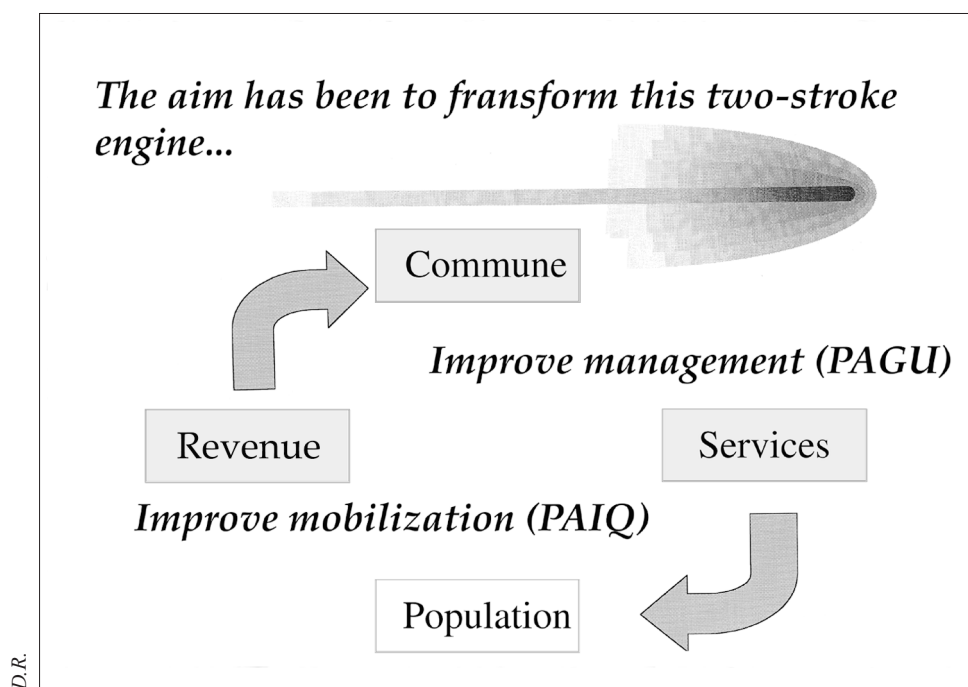
alleviation to the associations, with Aid Projects for Neighbourhood Initiatives (PAIQs) which have been used to:

- help the people to mobilize at grassroots level (the neighbourhood),
- train aid workers for these initiatives,
- accurately analyse the situation in the target neighbourhoods.

But these projects have also threatened to trigger antinomic or contradictory approaches: the neighbourhood against the city and the municipality.

The third phase is now beginning. The end of the 1990s was marked by the end of the “association” “institution” dichotomy, with a

reconciling of the two strategies. In 1998, in four cities, the “PAIQ” technical assistants became the local representatives of the Support Projects for Urban Management (PAGUs), in charge of the communes. Instead of being aids for “real people” mobilized against an unknown, elusive communal institution, these PAIQs became stakeholders in the build up of ties between the people and the institution. They encouraged the communes to move towards the associations, acknowledge their action and help bring them to the fore, and they encouraged the associations to treat the commune as the core partner. Moreover, the last project has opened up decisively towards development that is more local than institutional, with:



- A more favourable Ministry of the Budget attitude to the development of self-governing provinces,
- a local economic development component (monographs, urban and micro-regional economic diagnoses, etc.),
- the generalization to twelve cities, of partnership initiatives based on the urban project concept.

This has highlighted a real fiscal potential for all twelve cities and a strong commitment to local development.

The PAGU-PAIQ joint approach thus enables dual-input local development to be implemented:

- Input involving associations and aid to neighbourhoods,
- Input involving institutions and aid to communes.

It is a contractual system between the two parties, in which:

- the commune is the client,
- the associations are the field representatives,
- and the people are mobilized towards its development, thus strengthening the communal institution.

This enables the commune to remain the driving force behind local development...

The commune shelters the residents and must provide them with critical services such as water, education and health. To provide these services, the

commune must have money, the "sinews of war". No money, no services but... no services, no revenue, as the people will refuse to pay what they owe.

But the people are stakeholders in this local development. They live in and form the commune, they mobilize in favour of services that are vital to them. Without these local initiatives, there are no services. But they refuse to pay taxes to a "do-nothing" commune which, unable to act without money, no longer plays a part in local life, a situation that may cause centrifugal forces to develop... If the engine of local development is to work, it must enable commune and inhabitants to act as one.

And to actuate this engine, as if to drive a wheel, momentum must be given to the four component parts: commune, services, inhabitants and revenue.

Through this joint approach in which the two projects have been mainstreamed, it has been possible to:

- strengthen the communes in their relations with the inhabitants and their representative associations,
- facilitate the contractualization of work between the partners,
- consolidate the national anti-poverty debate through better knowledge of the partners to be mobilized,

- provide joint project leadership (between the two projects) to develop the Urban Poverty reduction Programme (PULP) adopted by the Government in May 2001.

This new strategic potential will address the various aspects of the fight against urban exclusion through the four strategic priorities of the PULP: urban governance, living environment and housing, economic growth and urban social integration.

These four priorities will enable the antinomic approaches of the past to be synthesized and, above all, organized and synergized.

Which strategies for tomorrow? The Urban Poverty reduction Programme was approved by the government in May 2001, and by donors in July.

It is being included in the PRSP (Poverty reduction Strategy papers) and will be entitled to benefit from debt relief under the HIPC (Heavily Indebted Poor Countries) Delot Initiative. The PULP has thus become the support system for all donors. French Development Aid will retain a leadership role and will be present through the Priority Solidarity Fund (FSP, formerly FAC), together with the French Development Agency.

These new strategic approaches offer good prospects of

implementing strategies, which instead of engaging in technicist development in which institutions and associations go their separate, antinomic ways, will be based on a three-pillar structure:

a) **Local development** that integrates various sectoral aspects (institutional, human, social, cultural, and economic development, capacity building, etc.),

b) **Participatory governance** that empowers the stakeholders (in local or municipal commissions, suggestion and mobilization forums).

c) **Contractualization between the tiers** concerned by this development: Central Government - Provinces - Communes - Neighbourhoods.

These three priorities form the strategic basis for building future projects to be implemented under the PULP Programme, which is the strategic framework for action to combat urban exclusion in Madagascar. ■

Publications



Regard sur les économies locales, une approche renouvelée sur les stratégies de développement en Afrique de l'Ouest. - Cotonou: Municipal Development Programme, April 2001.- 27 p. (Les Cahiers du PDM, No. 3).

Summary of the work of the ECOLOC Programme, using case studies on ten cities in Sahel and their hinterlands to show the extent of local self-government conceded by decentralization laws to local authorities, to describe participatory and shared management of grassroots development, and to propose a quantitative and qualitative reference framework for these new governance territories.

Free of charge.

→ Contact: PDM, BP 01 3445 Cotonou Benin, fax 229 30 19 76, E-mail: pdm@intnet.bj

Les services d'eau et d'assainissement en Argentine à l'heure néolibérale. Globalization of locally field-tested "models" by Bernard de Gouvello. Preface by Michel Marié.- Paris: L'Harmattan, 2001.- 240 p.

For the past fifteen years, the institutional organization of water and sanitation services in Argentina has undergone extensive restructuring, with the emergence of new actors such as private companies, local authorities and cooperatives. Based on four case studies, the author describes the mechanisms and concrete conditions of operation and control of the services.

Price: FRF 140.

→ Contact: Ed. L'Harmattan, 5-7 rue de l'Ecole Polytechnique, 75005 Paris, France.

Les métropoles des "Sud"

by Jean-François Troin. - Paris: Ellipses-Marketing, 2000.- 160 p. (Carrefours de Géographie coll.).

In the age of globalization, which international metropolises can be identified in the "Souths"? These cities in Latin America, Africa, the Middle East or Asia offer widely varying urban personalities and a different metropolitan potential. Based on the most recent population statistics and an original cartography, the book proposes a broad panorama of these cities.

Price: FRF 90.

→ Contact: Ed. Ellipses, 32 rue Bargue, 75740 Paris Cedex 15, France

Feedback from Habitat II + 5

Jean-Pierre Dufay, Director-General of AURIF

We knew that the New York meeting in June 2001 would be confronted with the results of the fifty or more assertions, commitments and requests vis-à-vis the States and the international community, which were adopted by the Istanbul assembly in its final declaration on 31 May 1996.

Although one or two elements of satisfaction and interest have emerged concerning the role of cities in development, the overall result of this meeting is rather gloomy. Sometimes the States have set up obstacles (the right to housing, for example), sometimes they have marginalized discussions on other “current events” such as the Israeli colonies on the West Bank, or terrorism. The participation of NGOs was poor compared to the militant assertions at Istanbul in 1966, and as for the “politically correct” wording of the final resolutions, they do not measure up to Istanbul either.

The only remotely positive feedback concerns the role of cities in development. Local authorities now seem to be officially recognized by the UN. At the politico-institutional level, Kofi Annan attended the 2nd World Assembly of Cities and Local Authorities

(WACLA). At the technical level, the concurrent thematic workshops provided an opportunity to present the results of new democratic management practices (participatory budgets, particularly in Brazil), and new development approaches tailored to local cultural and political conditions and to some levels of the global urban network (see programme led by the IUA on intermediate cities).

I noted some progress in the recognition of the variety of “city modes” enabling policies and cooperation to be matched to the role of cities in national economies and in the world economy (the more they develop, the more dependent they are on globalization). However, the main discourse on “the city” still overlooks the specific phenomenon of metropolization and the geography of global cities, which particularly extend beyond borders in cases where the economies of these urban centres drive the economies of

countries.

As regards this key role of cities, progress has been noted in the “partnership governance” concept but it is difficult to say whether this concept has been taken to mean a decision-making process or only a decision-building process. And still on the subject of local self-organization, no clear answers have been put forward on the consequences of “less State”. Will it or won’t it set the stage for more privatization? And can it or can’t it be said, as some people say, that the centralist discourse on the power of cities is an “ideological G-string” to deal directly with cities, by-pass States and give rural areas the cold shoulder for good?

The fact remains that grassroots cooperation between cities seems to be making headway. Habitat II had stressed the importance of this cooperation in response to the challenge of real urban governance, but the New York meeting was rather a let-

down in terms of the technical approach (and not only the globally economic, social and environmental approach) to urban cooperation. Although some people poured scorn on what they considered to be a marketing operation on “good urban practices” (for instance, the French delegation presented a volume of successful GIS experiences of thirty local authorities, a subject also given importance by the American delegation), I remain convinced that the concrete resources of this new governance will not only be financial or institutional but will also be based on tools and practices that can be, and really are, adapted to the contexts of other partners.

Although Habitat II had the great merit of being a real “city summit”, we sadly have the feeling that we have come back down to earth with the New York meeting, which in my view has made little contribution to the progress of new urban governance. ■

Conferences Training

- **New challenges: transport must adapt**
- **Housing for the poor, which policies to cope with urban inequality**
- **Vision and power: Metropolitan governance in the new millennium**

New challenges: transport must adapt

International French-speaking conference, organized from 23 to 24 January 2002 by ATEC. To meet transport modernization requirements, the congress will present organizational and technical solutions for use at all local levels, cities and urban districts, regional and European schemes whose implementation requires a study of political, economic, legal and financial organization methods. An exhibition, Atexpo 2002 will be held alongside the conference.

→ Contact: atec.bureau@wanadoo.fr – Website: www.atec-tec.net

Housing for the poor, which policies to cope with urban inequality

This seminar is organized from 8 to 10 April 2002 in Casablanca, on the initiative of the Moroccan Secretary of State’s office, in partnership with the World Bank, the Urbama laboratory and INTA. It will cover the social effects of housing projects and policies for the poor. Which results and lessons can be drawn from past experience? Which policies are to be implemented and how can we move on from projects and programmes to real structured policies.

→ Contact: colhabmaroc@hotmail.com

Vision and power: Metropolitan governance in the new millennium

The next three-yearly Metropolis Congress will be held from 27 to 31 May 2002 in Seoul, Korea. It is open to Metropolis members and to the public and will address the administration of cities in a globalization context, the links between government transparency and citizenship, and urban indicators in the information society. A special workshop will focus on the role of cities in the reunification of Korea.

→ Contact: www.metropolis2002.org

The second annual seminar of the High Council for International Cooperation was held on 3, 4 and 5 September 2001 on the subject: Global public property and cooperation strategy.

In a number of workshops and plenary sessions, a study was made on how this concept is able to renew French cooperation strategies and methods. The aim of the seminar was to cover operational aspects of major issues such as cooperation to combat pandemic diseases, preservation of the ecosystem and the implementation of economic, social and cultural rights.

Nearly 500 people took part in this seminar, a wide variety of development aid actors were present, around a number of personalities including Jean-Pierre Elong M'Bassi (MDP Cotonou) who led the discussions on the "The City and Sustainable Development" Workshop. Summaries of the contributions and highlights of the studies will shortly be available on the HCCI website:

→ Contact: <http://www.hcci.gouv.fr>

Regional dialogue on democratic decentralization

A Programme of exchanges of information and capitalization of experience via the Internet between a network of actors from different countries, "Regional Dialogue on Democratic Decentralization" has set up a friendly website, the partners to which are the Western and Central African Municipal Development Programme (MDP), based in Cotonou, the International Development Centre of the Research Triangle Institute, USAID, and the Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS)

→ Contact: <http://www.ddialogue.com>

Urban Development and the Heritage

The proceedings of the one-day seminar organized by AdP (Association de Professionnels - Développement Urbain et Coopération) on 8 September 2000 have now been published. The papers made an in-depth examination of the heritage concept and a study on the conflict between heritage and modernity, and

Local Economies and Finances

Within the scope of activities of the MDP ECOFILOC Programme (Local Economies and Finances), various publications have been produced:

- Overview of local finances 1996, 1997 and 1998, which presents local budgets, their weight in the State budget and in the GDP. It also covers the structure of revenue and expenditure of local authorities and their investment and savings capacity,

- African local finance magazine, which covers all aspects of local finance in West and Central Africa and acts as a forum for exchanges and promotion of experiences conducted in African countries,

- Local economy evaluation handbook which offers local development practitioners an operational evaluation method of the local economy and presents a summary of technical documents. See also "Publications" section.

→ Contact: *Programme de Développement Municipal: pdm@intnet.bj*

Project on Urban Integration and Neighbourhood Cooperation

This French technical assistance project in Togo, which is a pilot support project for municipal urban management in a context of decentralization and strong urban growth, has set up a website to inform Togolese partners of other urban projects and all interested persons, and the documents, software and guides drawn up under the project. Besides these tools, which can be downloaded, it presents the aims and action priorities, and the partners.

→ Contact: <http://www.piucp.org>

Settlement management and crisis management in developing countries

The meeting, organized by Isted and chaired by Georges Mercadal, Vice-President of the Conseil Général des Ponts et Chaussées (General Council for Highways and Civil Engineering), was held on 26 September 2001 in the premises of the Conseil Général des Ponts et Chaussées. The main items on the agenda were a presentation of "Settlement" studies by Jean-Marie Cour and experience feedback on the "Crisis emergence" programmes by Vincent Lacour.

It was decided to set up a study programme on settlement management and crisis emergence, led by Jean-Marie Cour and Vincent Lacour. This programme, developed in close consultation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGCID) and the High Commissioner for Refugees (HCR), comes under the auspices of the Conseil Général des Ponts et Chaussées and is conducted by Isted.

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Support for land use planning and local development policies

This project to relaunch land use planning policies in the Priority Solidarity Zone, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, should draw closely on forward-looking work associating partners from the countries concerned through an "action learning" approach. Policy awareness-raising and capacity building of the actors are among the goals of the project. A project steering committee, presided over by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, will be set up as soon as the project begins. It will include representatives of DATAR, technical ministries, the IRD and the AFD. To ensure that the activities adopted under the project are scientifically valid, it is planned to involve some experts (mainly academics).

Technical assistance for the MDP has been set up for this purpose in Cotonou.

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