

WUF III Networking Event on 22 June 2006

Public Engagement: The Inclusive Approach

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Introduction

Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome to this Networking Event of HPF. We have heard it several times during the last days, and especially this morning:

We are facing growing urbanisation and emptying rural areas, we have to manage growing cities in Africa, Asia and Latin America and even in Vancouver, where more than additional 1million new citizens are expected. On the other hand – and this should be also on the agenda of WUF – we struggle with shrinking cities in Europe and nearly everywhere with shrinking villages.

In all cases we need visions and goals to cope with the challenges, we need always public engagement and public participation if we want to become successful to achieve a minimum of sustainable development like in most Asian or African cities or a maximum of sustainable development as it is aimed in Vancouver or Montreal by establishing eco-structures, charters of rights and responsibilities, or so-called eco-villages.

It may really be a bit astonishing for some people that there are still intensive discussions about the right way to practice participation effectively and efficiently and obviously we still need to discuss “matters of course” after such a long time and especially after Rio and Agenda 21 start. We are not fed up to discuss this!

The Mayor of Montreal writes in his foreword to the publication “Interaction with the Public” that there are still very few publications like his practical guide for private, public or community promoters. “Turning ideas into actions” – the motto of WUF III needs effective professional planning (not only actions) and it needs indeed a more professional participation. And it needs the permanent exchange of ideas and practical experiences.

The more our world, our life, our cities and villages become complex, the more we experience a growing civil society the more we need a joint understanding between the officials and professionals on the one side and the citizens and stakeholders on the other side about the need and the right approaches of public participation in planning and urban and rural land management.

Peter Oberlander has pointed out in the Dialogue 2 on Tuesday: Participation is breaking down separation of disciplines and professions. HPF as a loose alliance of globally acting planner associations and professionals is aiming at the same goal: Breaking down separated and even silo thinking!

Against this background we would like to start a new round of discussions with you and from several topical, disciplinary and regional perspectives.

It is my great pleasure to welcome and introduce five international speakers, who each are very prominent and experienced experts on planning and participation.