

# **1. Policy orientation guidelines of relevance in the future treatment of Historic cities and Quarters**

- 1.1 Strategic vision and a development framework** are essential ingredients to a coordinated approach to area renewal, maximizing the synergies between different schemes and reducing unproductive disturbance to existing activities;
- 1.2 Urban area rehabilitation has to be multi-dimensional in approach,** encompassing enhancements to the physical environment, the built environment and the social fabric and more than ever the natural environment. This all with a view to improving the quality of life for residents and efficiency of businesses.
- 1.3** It is important that the identity of an area be enhanced, **not destroyed**, and especially in terms of Cultural Heritage and preservation of the positive aspects of existing built and natural environments should be addressed in a holistic and pragmatic fashion.
- 1.4** As in indicated above, **Public-private partnerships** can enhance the effectiveness of the activities of all concerned and create a sense of mutual trust and mutual purpose with which to propel change in a beneficial direction;
- 1.5 Special-purpose and, locally based agencies** are often best suited to implementing and coordinating urban area re-development, if they are unencumbered by excessive bureaucratic constraints and are locally sensitive and flexible in approach;
- 1.6 Urban area improvement schemes should minimize the possible negative social implications of change,** such as the displacement of former urban residents (and, in particular, the poor, the aged, the minorities). Gentrification of all sorts needs to be avoided. New phenomena of migrant groups in Historic Cities would have to be addressed.
- 1.7 Local initiative should be fully utilized** in area improvement and local needs acknowledged; community participation in the process of change can be as

important as the final stage of rehabilitation, improving the sense of community responsibility. One should seek social cohesion as opposed to social exclusion which can come about paradoxically from Revitalization Projects in Historic Cities.

- We could say that population growth, influx of immigrants, and the evolving economic base all challenge the capacity of historic cities to provide jobs and livelihood.
- One of the major problems in Latin America is that the middle class engaged in economic activities are either fleeing the historic core or actively destroying it, leaving behind urban poverty with chaotic street vendors and the so-called informal sector which, when not well organized and located in terms of zoning, can also be extremely destructive for the fabric of the Historic City. Thus the whole process of rejuvenation or revitalization is very much related to the economic base of the inhabitants of the Historic City and the involvement of the local community in reclaiming its heritage. There are exceptions now in successful projects I Old Havana, Cuba and Quito in Ecuador.
- It is essential to reform institutions, improve functions and systems, introduce a general educational programme which will give people the opportunity to participate, improve living standards and revive traditional involvement, which, of course, includes the enhancement of both the public domain and private enterprise and the so called immaterial heritage of know-how, customs, and traditions.

## **2 As conclusive remarks, we can say that:**

2.1 There is no doubt that Heritage is an asset for city development.

- 2.2 Conservation of the Built Heritage in itself is not sustainable, nor desirable, in an isolated form.
- 2.3 Conservation must go hand in hand with the revitalization and rehabilitation process of Inner Cities in Latin America and the Caribbean, and other developing countries. Sometimes, they become more like poverty belts in the centre of the cities.
- 2.4 Social poverty and cultural richness would have to be reconciled. Experience shows it can.
- 2.5 Projects addressing **housing, transport, the environment, health and education, water/sanitation, infrastructure, waste management, visitation, Adaptive Re-use of monuments** for social, cultural and employment/job-creating structures, along with special Urban Management Plans and Programmes would have to be put in place.
- 2.6 It is clear that local governments would have to play a key role in bringing about integral rehabilitation projects in Inner Historic Cities and seek and create conditions for innovative means of public-private partnerships for some services.
- 2.7 Municipal finance and the question of funding integral projects with economically and socially viable results for the improvement of the quality of life of inhabitants is a **must**.
- 2.8 We can certainly learn from past experiences and call upon new stake-holders and seek the organized participation of the local population, linking at all times metropolitan urban development to historic districts' rehabilitation/conservation programmes. This calls for the creation of "specialized agencies" within the Municipal Bodies and/ or parallel to them. That is a must.
- 2.9 Many historic cities have been conserved largely by accident, and recently actions are geared toward preservation and development programmes. In the future they will most likely be conserved by deliberate decision/action or not at all.

- 2.10 This is particularly true in the case of historic inner cities of large metropolitan areas.
- 2.11 In Latin America and the Caribbean, this decade, people and governments are called upon to be decision-makers at all levels, alongside “practitioners” to see that cities in general and historic quarters are sustainably developed and conserved.
- 2.12 We consider that in the immediate future the approach would have to be realistic and practical.
- 2.13 We believe that through the rehabilitation of historic cities, the urban environment could be made more human and habitable.
- 2.14 Operations at the city-centre level cannot be simply skin-deep or a face-lift, but social, humane, economic, technically sound, and sustainable and cultural as well in context of the human and natural environment and effects of climate changes and possible solutions thereof in particular in urban areas.
- 3 In the future, the Historic City cannot be considered any more as an urban setting exclusively of architecture of the past. New forms, **contemporary modern architecture**, can well be incorporated in the form of totally new buildings in old settings. Partial renovations with new elements can also be in place.
- 4 As to continuity, Old and new together create a harmonious composition of complementary architectures, adding new life to the Cultural Heritage. Today’s architectural heritage may well choke our future giving a harmonious continuity to past values.
- 5 Preservation is obviously preferable to the demolition of a good building and its replacement by a poor one. An adequately conceived, including new architectural designs/shapes, and well-executed Adaptive Re-use of a building should be a major element for the **future** of historic cities.

A building should not be preserved at the price of stifling innovation.

This type of intervention will bring life to the architectural heritage.

There is no place for museum cities in the future nor to that matter “exclusively” tourism cities” will have to be avoided. We cannot ossify society.

The historian Roy Porter sums it up: “When buildings take the precedence over people, we get heritage, not history.”

- 6 Again, in the future, we should opt for keeping residents in the city centre; an essential objective of sustainable planning. This means that housing strategies that encourage inner city living must be supported by policies which improve the quality of air, the safety of the streets, education and mobility of the city along with the conservation of the Built Heritage.
- 7 Housing would have to be acknowledged as a major factor of urban regeneration, along with upgrading economic activities.
- 8 Public housing would have to be built by self-governing housing associations, coordinated by the local authority and integrated with privately owned housing and private capital.

Tenants and local people are to be involved in the entire process of procuring new housing and renovation of the Urban Heritage housing stock.

- 9 De-densification may well be inevitable (Fez, Havana e.t.c)

- **A Sustainable Historic City in the future** hopefully will be along the assertions made recently by the well-known British architect Richard Rogers on cities in general:  
**A Just City**, where justice, food, shelter, education, health and hope are fairly distributed and where all people participate in the government;
- **A Beautiful City**, where architecture and landscape spark the imagination and move the spirit;
- **A Creative City**, where open-mindedness and experimentation mobilize the full potential of its human resources and allows a fast response to change;
- **An Ecological City**, which minimizes its ecological impact, where landscape and built form are balanced and where buildings and infrastructures are safe and resource-efficient;
- **A City of Easy Contact**, where the public realm encourages community and mobility, and where information is exchanged both face-to-face and electronically;
- **A Compact and Polycentric City**, which protects the countryside, focuses and integrates communities within neighborhoods and maximizes proximity;
- **A Diverse City**, where broad ranges of overlapping activities create animation, inspiration and foster a vital public life. Bearing in mind the intangible heritage.