

## **Resource Architecture**

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**Questions by the Scientific Committee to the  
XXI World Congress of Architecture UIA Berlin 2002**

#### Members of the Committee

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## 1

**Prologue**

*Of all the arts architecture bears the greatest social responsibility and has the greatest impact on society. Architects cannot build heaven on earth, but they can design homes and cities that are fit for people to live in; cities that are more than just land use plans cast in concrete.*

**Dr. h. c. Johannes Rau**  
**President of the Federal Republic of Germany**  
**Patron of the XXI UIA World Congress of Architecture**  
**Berlin 2002**

*"Resource Architecture", the main theme of the Berlin Congress, is of fundamental importance for the future development of the world's cultures and for our profession. We see our task as being to establish a more sustainable relationship with the natural and built environment and to work for a more equitable world, in which greater attention is paid to the needs of minorities and the homeless and respect is shown for the diversity of architecture.*

**Vassilis Sgoutas**  
**President of the Union Internationale des Architectes (UIA)**

*The XXI World Congress of Architecture of the Union Internationale des Architectes (UIA), which is being held in Berlin in 2002, will continue the international dialogue on how living standards in cities and regions throughout the world can be maintained and enhanced. Two years ago, the capital of the Federal Republic of Germany hosted the Urban 21 Global Conference on the Urban Future. Architects and architecture bear a great responsibility for the quality of the built environment.*

**Kurt Bodewig**  
**Federal Minister of Transport,**  
**Construction and Housing**

*Renewed efforts are required to achieve a global balance between economic interests and environmental concerns and the needs of different societies and cultures. Regional traditions must be preserved and linked with innovations that are capable of providing a better future.*

*We are confident that the XXI World Congress of Architecture will be an important forum for debate and the presentation of new ideas in this respect.*

**Andreas Gottlieb Hempel**  
**President of the XXI World Congress of Architecture Berlin 2002**

**10 Questions by the Scientific Committee  
to the XXI World Congress of Architecture  
UIA Berlin 2002**

Question 1

On what moral values does the responsibility of those substantially involved in planning and building rest?

Question 2

What building blocks for a new global peace order can architects provide with their architectures?

Question 3

How can the ecological costs for the built environment be internalised in economic efficiency more than has previously been done while observing their global effects?

Question 4

How can innovations in architecture build on traditions and the history of building?

Question 5

How can regional identity in architecture, economy and society be perceived as an added value and how can it be continued in a modern guise?

Question 6

How can beauty in architecture correspond to contemporary content and take a timeless shape?

Question 7

How can the social value of planning as a holistic way of thinking in relation to independent decisions and individual buildings be increased?

Question 8

How can sustainable, resource-saving construction contribute to a greater degree of social justice?

Question 9

In what ways can planning and building protect the material resources and increase the spiritual resources of beauty and identity?

Question 10

How are architects to take a stand when political changes are required, but when the realities of planning and building take the same old form?

## 1 Responsibility for global problems

**The XXI World Congress of Architecture UIA Berlin 2002, which is being held early in the 21st century, intends to remind architects, engineers and planners in all countries and on all continents that they have a joint responsibility to help resolve the global problems mankind will face in the new century.**

The 21st century marks the beginning of the end of the industrial age as we have known it so far, as the success and progress it has achieved are being undermined by severe conflicts:<sup>1</sup>

- the domination of capital over labour,
- the pursuit of growth and prosperity to the detriment of the environment,
- the purely rationalistic approach to science and technical progress,
- and the inequitable distribution of wealth

have proved to be inhumane and prone to crisis. They are about to founder on their own inherent contradictions.

The time has come to do away with these contradictions and bid farewell to one-sided Modernist paradigms. A dialogue between cultures, incorporating due respect for their long-standing traditions, must lead to the elaboration of new principles that treat man not as the ruler of the cosmos but as part of it.

The approach to planning and the architecture of Modernism reflect the structural forms of this era that will soon be replaced by another.

Architecture as a resource is a concept that forges a relationship with history and nurtures the hope that mankind can live in harmony with nature.

The participants in the XXI World Congress of Architecture are called upon to make a stand, to demonstrate a political commitment and to produce innovative solutions. Essentially, this is a slight re-phrasing of the much-used slogan "Think globally, act locally".

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<sup>1</sup> Clarifying remark: The majority of people in the developing countries is turning from a society characterised by manual production to a society with industrial production. Even in highly industrialised countries, industrial productions evolve, modified by electronic control. We are talking here about the turn towards new design principles of industrial production.

**Question 1**

On what moral values does the responsibility of those substantially involved in planning and building rest?

## **2 In accord with the United Nations**

The XXI World Congress of Architecture UIA Berlin 2002, following in the footsteps of the major conferences held by the United Nations, will propose that the resources of architecture should be used to meet the demands raised by these conferences and by UNESCO, in particular at its General Assembly of November 2001. With this in mind, it will call for a dialogue between

- cultures,
- civilisations,
- disciplines.

and will refer to the

- Environment Conference in Rio de Janeiro (1992),
- World Population Conference in Kairo (1994),
- Conference on Human Settlements in Istanbul (1996),
- demands made by the World Heritage Centre.

The UIA World Congress will provide an opportunity to continue the debate on cities in the 21st century, which began with the Urban 21 Global Conference on the Urban Future that was held in Berlin in the year 2000.

The XXI World Congress of Architecture UIA Berlin 2002 would like to contribute a number of building blocks to the new global peace policy long since called for by the Executive Director of UNEP, Klaus Töpfer, for the benefit of

- humankind,
- the environment
- and cultures.

**Question 2**  
**What building blocks for a new global peace order can architects provide with their architectures?**

### 3 Sustainability as the foundation

The need to adopt a sustainable approach to the use of natural and social resources has become a fundamental political and moral principle. All over the world, however, economies continue to be propelled by an outdated logic of development, which operates to the detriment of the environment and the economically weak.

The reports issued by the United Nations and the measurements recorded by well-known research institutes make it quite clear that

- forests are continuing to die as a result of “acid rain” and the clearing of tropical forests;
- global warming is proceeding unabated as a result of the unchecked consumption of fossil energy supplies;
- the denaturing of water cycles in the dry and humid regions of the world, which has been brought about by traditional systems of water supply and drainage, the use of large reservoirs and “state-of-the-art” re-routing of rivers, has not changed;
- 30 million people are fleeing war and hunger. Third World is increasing relentlessly.

The highly industrialised states, in particular, are reluctant to set a good example by putting their economic activities on a sustainable footing and ensuring a socially more equitable balance. Clear evidence of this was provided by the tough negotiations on implementation of the Kyoto Protocol to reduce greenhouse gases and the attitude adopted by the United States.

Every man-made structure is an intrusion on the natural environment. Keeping such intrusions to a minimum would be one way in which architecture could contribute to resolving the global environmental problems that will result from development in the future. Every time a building is demolished stored energies are destroyed, material flows are stepped up and waste is inevitably generated. Hence there are two sides to “Resource Architecture”. Given the urgent need for sustainability and the maintenance of national wealth, the preservation of existing buildings and urban facilities ranks on a par with the construction of new buildings that are in harmony with the natural environment.

But what is the situation in real life? How many of the new buildings erected in developed and highly developed countries satisfy the criteria of sustainability? The existing fabric is being ruthlessly demolished and devalued in order to make room for the construction of new buildings. Building projects involving the sparing use of energy and materials are still a rarity and many high-rise buildings held up to be environmentally

compatible may turn out to have a poor eco-balance when examined more closely.

Even among experts little distinction is made between integration and application. Rather than applying an integrated, resource-saving design from the outset, the majority of projects go to great technical lengths to integrate energy-saving features in conventionally constructed buildings. This makes them complicated, increases the outlay for construction and maintenance and creates no more than the appearance of sustainability. The term "environmentally compatible" is compromised in the process and turned into an "increased cost factor". Seen in global terms, that is very short-sighted.

There is no justification for claiming that the conditions for sustainable methods of building are poor, energy too cheap, rules and regulations too lax, clients not sensitive and an awareness of the issues non-existent. The good examples provided by dedicated architects and intelligent clients all over the world demonstrate that there is a great deal of freedom and room for manoeuvre.

If we really want improved conditions for sustainable building we need to establish first whether we can envisage such conditions and whether we are prepared to wholeheartedly embrace them in policy terms. These principles apply first and foremost to highly developed countries and regions with a stagnating population and declining growth figures. In countries and regions with continuing strong economic growth, priorities need to be set that encourage the sparing use of resources.

1. Every building is given energy coefficients as the norm for its life cycle. Ideally this will permit the consumption of environmental energy only and allow a diminishing ratio between fossil energy and environmental energy for a transitional period. These measured values contain the overall energy balance for preparatory demolition, preparation of the subsoil, construction of the building and subsequent operation.
2. As regards drainage systems, the principle should apply that the run-off from a property / area of land should not be any worse after preparation / building than it was before in terms of the ratio between rainwater infiltration, evaporation and storage.
3. New buildings should preferably be erected on areas that have already been used for construction purposes. This is a general recycling precept, while a return to free space may also be sensible if a better ecological balance can be obtained by building on a different site.
4. Every building must be disposed of after the expiry of its life cycle at the expense of its owners.



In this way the prevailing system of consumption would be replaced by a system of cycles. The polluter-pays principle will have a key role to play in this respect. How are we to respond to such demands? Shall we list all the practical constraints to show that this approach is mere “wishful thinking”; or shall we rise to the innovative challenge by demonstrating its feasibility?

The internalisation of environmental costs has long been a standard theorem in environmental economics and a recognised economic principle. In the course of this century product liability and the obligation to take back products will become a normal feature of production and corporate responsibility. A start has already been made with automobiles and other product areas will follow. Why has this not long been the case in the construction industry, where large amounts of energy are stored and where around 80 per cent of the waste are “produced”?

The question we have to ask ourselves, therefore, is whether and when there will be a take-back obligation for buildings and their parts and how we can make the necessary preparations. Here again there are two regulatory mechanisms we can use to assess our attitude and approach.

1. In future every building permit will incorporate the need for a demolition description documenting how the new building can be safely reintegrated into the energy and materials cycle.
2. The granting of a demolition permit will entail the setting up of a reserve fund (guaranteed by a bank and secured against bankruptcy), which can be used to pay for the demolition costs even if no-one is responsible any more for unoccupied buildings, abandoned properties and vanished companies.

The fact that design and the architecture that flows from it could take on very different forms as a result of the demolition commitment should stimulate our imagination:

- no destruction of materials
- flexible handling of construction, completion and installation
- the passing on of rooms and facilities that are no longer required to those in need etc..

### **Question 3**

**How can the ecological costs for the built environment be internalised in economic efficiency more than has previously been done while observing their global effects?**

#### **4 Respect for history**

“Resource Architecture” is more than just a stored material resource; it is also a repository of history, cultural awareness and identity.

Cultural values are vanishing at a breathtaking pace in the wake of worldwide modernisation and globalisation. They include landscapes, buildings, urban facilities, cultural monuments and traditions, languages and national heritage. Aggravating the situation is the destruction caused by seemingly archaic wars fought with ultra-modern weapons.

This phenomenon dates from the onset of industrialisation. Nature conservation and the preservation of historical monuments both date from the middle of the 19th century.

The challenge the design of buildings, cities and landscape faces in the 21st century is to resolve the contradiction between conservation and modernisation. Our task is to build upon existing cultural values, i.e. to lay a new cultural layer on top of the old and not destroy it in the process. Modernisation can only be accepted if it forms a relationship with the existing fabric.

If in certain cases the new should eliminate the old, strict criteria must be applied requiring proof that what is new embodies an “added value”. Hence nature conservation and monument preservation demands should not be perceived as difficulties, but as quality requirements for conversion.

Yet how many architects are there who attempt to create an image for themselves in theory and practice by protesting vehemently against the restrictions that are imposed in protection provisions for conservation purposes?

If we do not forge a link between new buildings and the past and fail to ensure that new buildings form a part of future sustainable development in the world, more and more people will turn away from architecture and devote their energies to re-naturalisation, restoration and the reconstruction of buildings from the past. “Progress without a historical context” will find itself increasingly at odds with public opinion and community action groups. Planning and building propelled by an outdated logic of development will become more conflict-prone, time-consuming, cost-intensive, incalculable and, as a result, uneconomic in overall terms.

The reports and memoranda of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre illustrate just how dramatic the destruction of pre-modern cultures is.

By no means all countries have sophisticated systems for the conservation of nature and historic monuments and even if they did the question arises as to how they should be handled. The example of Germany shows that an advanced system of protection and conservation can be counterproductive if it is perceived and criticised as being an obstacle to future development, the modernisation of the economy, the creation of new jobs and the activities of global investors. We, therefore, need to ask what our attitude is and whether we can devise innovative solutions that will make it possible to map out a future based on "architectural as a historical resource".

#### **Question 4**

**How can innovations in architecture build on traditions and the history of building?**

#### ***Exposition Demolition***

*On the handling of the most recent period in architectural history and the method of building employed in industrialised societies*

- *on the elimination of entire industrial landscapes as part of the process of de-industrialisation*
- *on the demolition of housing developments erected as part of modern urban planning (incorrectly limited to buildings made from prefabricated slabs)*
- *on the return of nature to towns and cities*

*To what extent is there an historical obligation in this demolition; how many resources are wasted in the levelling that is usually carried out? What can we learn for future urban planning from the experience of demolition, bearing in mind that megacities throughout the world, and especially in the Far East and China, develop in accordance with the same logic?*

## 5 Regionalism versus global uniformity

Sustainability and historicity are of equal value as the foundations on which regional architecture develops. "Regional building" is generally seen as the antithesis to the increasingly uniform nature of cities around the world. Indeed, international investors currently seem to have precious little interest in the regional building sector. The result is that products of planning and building can end up standing next to each other even though they are completely different in terms of their location, building volume, investors, financing, developers, architecture and appearance and thus in their atmosphere and identity.

Ideally, you (still) have the client, the town surveyor and the building contractor involved in construction at the local level, where houses are built by small or medium-size construction companies. At the international level, however, matters are in the hands of developers / investors with an anonymous design department in the background and occasionally an international star architect in the foreground who, together with corporate construction groups, are interested in producing properties that will be attractive in the financial market place. The difference is that, while buildings at the local level are generally erected for owner occupation or a specific occupant, at the international level they are produced for capital investment. This pair of opposites is inappropriate to future developments, however. Clinging to them will simply mean that the international level will override the local level.

Regionalism is a general aspiration that opposes the uniformity produced by globalisation by preserving the criteria of sustainability and by respecting the demand for historicity. Together with sustainability, the new interpretation of structural traditions generates regional diversity and economic benefits.

A major prerequisite for the accomplishment of this goal is that architecture should not be dependent on investors, but should be able to hold its own in the push and pull between short-term return on investment and long-term profitability. This again depends on a global, integrated consideration of – and responsibility for – the costs involved.

The best prospect of such architecture emerging is through independent architects from independent organisations, who are sufficiently well versed in the principles governing global investment that they are capable of understanding, mastering and handling the relevant processes, rules and regulations and can realise buildings which function reliably, use durable materials and establish an identity.

If regionalism were to reject these challenging demands, "regional building" would run the risk of withering away in

traditionalism and historical decor or of being overwhelmed by global anonymity.

The mood is favourable for regionalism because the need for “regional identity” is increasingly being expressed not just by traditionalists, but also by forward-looking politicians and key companies. However, regional identity can only emerge out of a respect for history and from the bold shaping of the future.

#### **Question 5**

**How can regional identity in architecture, economy and society be perceived as an added value and how can it be continued in a modern guise?**

## **6**

### **Beauty as a principle**

“Beauty as a principle” is a formulation that accords a high intrinsic value to the pleasing shape, to the aesthetic quality of architecture.

Beauty of form is intimately related to the aforementioned principles – the harmony of sustainability, historicity and regionalism and a genuine correspondence with the content.

This opens up a host of opportunities for design that do not continue in the vein of those forms which originally resulted from different technological interrelations. The issue is not to develop a kind of new style that is generally acceptable.

To that extent beauty is the product of reason. Over and above this, however, beauty is credited with the capacity of rising above reason, of being more than mere rationality and of enhancing rationality in an unexpected manner in the interests of good form while also respecting functionality and economic efficiency.

This added value, which is reflected in unorthodox internal and external representation and is expressed in a “roundabout return” with regard to economic efficiency, is often rationalised away at present and maligned as “useless architecture” even. In fact, what we are increasingly seeing is a dubious division, in which more and more building volume is produced for anonymous purpose-built structures and a “protected area” is set aside for building culture enabling “architecture” to find expression in cultural and representational buildings.

At the same time, however, there is a growing need for “fashionable attire”, for superficial forms and entertainment architecture. The question arises here as to whether such architecture merely has a fancy dress function with a very short life span, which flies in the face of the principles outlined above, or whether it is designed to foster the entertainment aspect.

#### **Question 6**

**How can beauty in architecture correspond to contemporary content and take a timeless form?**

## Exposition on engineering structures

*No special mention needs to be made of the fact that the principles dealt with so far also apply to “technical buildings” and the technical infrastructure, i.e. for buildings that are generally constructed today by engineers without the assistance of architects, such as bridges, workshops, manufacturing plants, multi-storey car parks, hydraulic engineering, traffic facilities, radio towers, power stations and waste disposal facilities. These buildings and the design and manufacturing processes associated with them have increasingly divested themselves of any responsibility for the shaping of the structural environment, often preferring instead to follow the rationalist principle of technical efficiency and cost saving. Calls for their integration into urban and landscape planning and for quality of design are dismissed as being “irrelevant” almost as a matter of principle.*

*From the start of industrialisation right on into the early 20th century, by contrast, it was taken for granted that at least the aspiration to efficiency in the use of materials, elegance and harmony ranked among the supreme design principles for technical structures along with their integration into urban and landscape planning.*

*These principles must still apply today, all the more so given the considerable extension of creative freedom resulting from advanced and innovative methods of design and construction.*

*The UIA World Congress 2002 will thus call upon architects and engineers, whose training and practical work have drifted far apart, to elaborate common values and design principles. Those commissioning technical buildings must come to see themselves more as responsible clients and developers. Quality of structure must play a leading role in the integrative design of a technical facility, with due consideration being given from the outset to its incorporation into urban and landscape planning.*

*This call contrasts sharply with widespread current practice, in which large-scale technical facilities are “dumped in towns and the countryside” without any thought being given in the technical and economic planning process to aspects of design. In Germany, e.g., the new sections built by Deutsche Bahn are engineering works that leave their mark on the landscape, even though they unfortunately do not aspire to a pronounced design principle.*

*However, if extensive thought is given to structure and form from the very beginning of the design process, it is possible that a technically and economically attractive project will ultimately be rejected for the simple reason that it is deemed inappropriate in urban and landscape planning terms. The design process can then be terminated without any major costs being incurred up front.*

## 7 Planning reigns supreme

The quality of a particular building depends on the quality of the building next to it and on the quality of the public spaces and the setting in which it stands. This is a truism that has traditionally contributed to the intrinsic value of rural and urban landscapes in all cultures.

This requires plans that express the relationship between buildings in the form of rules, which are binding for building projects. Rules of this kind can only be altered after lengthy periods of time have elapsed so that the principles inherent in them can be properly developed. Many major architects of the past were always outstanding urban and landscape architects, too. In the 18th and 19th centuries, in particular, large parks paved the way for town expansions and “ideal towns” were mapped out for rapidly growing areas.

Nowadays – in the highly developed countries at least – there is a confusion of different kinds of specialised planning, which do not align themselves to a clear overall picture and which are often more of a hindrance than a help. This explains the present-day “aversion” to planning. Planning is not popular and in some cases it is rejected outright. There is a feeling that individual interests and projects should be able to be pursued with little or no concern for the needs of others under the guise of the “freedom to build”. The argument put forward by the apologists of a supposed modern society is that it is impossible to apply planning regulations to today’s variety of lifestyles and plurality of interests, accompanied as they are by rapid changes in fashion-related requirements. The prospect this holds out is one of cities in chaos and the countryside as a land reserve to be exploited at random. With this in mind, the UIA World Congress at the start of the 21st century should address the issue of how planning can re-position itself between over-regulation and under-regulation.

On the one hand, there is a need for more “protective planning”, which – in the interests of sustainability and historicity – will erect barriers against arbitrariness and non-compliance with the rules for purely financial reasons. On the other hand, the deregulation of detailed planning could generate scope for innovation and individual solutions, provided those involved in the respective regions and buildings are aware of their responsibility for principles and standards and can reach an agreement accordingly. In such situations detailed planning, the binding nature of which may make it obstructive, can be replaced by intelligent interaction.

### Question 7

**How can the social value of planning as a holistic way of thinking in relation to independent decisions and individual buildings be increased?**



## **8**

### **Justice as a consequence**

The World Economic Forum has descended from Davos to Manhattan to demonstrate that the world economy refuses to be blown off course by the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. Taking place at the same time was the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, which was staged as an "alternative event". As an alternative to what?

We are talking here not merely about a functioning world economy that produces income from investments, but about a just world economy. Media coverage was devoted almost exclusively to the Economic Forum in New York with very little time or space being given to events in Porto Alegre.

This is a clear indication of the true balance of power despite the political demands that have been raised for a dialogue between cultures and for a just world economic order. In architecture and town planning this division leads to a socially unjust normality and a multitude of schemes that are designed to mitigate the effects of social segregation and promote the integration of minorities.

The survival of the still-growing megacities in the world depends on whether this division can be healed and a mode of development found that will pave the way for social justice and allow people to live together on an equal footing even though they may have very different lifestyles.

The principles of sustainability, historicity, regionalism and beauty must also lend support to social justice.

**Question 8**  
**How can sustainable, resource-saving construction contribute to a greater degree of social justice?**

## **9 Architecture as a resource**

**“Architecture as a resource” forms part of the cycles of nature. A repository of history and a vehicle for regional culture, it is committed to beautiful design. It is thus a habitation for social, peaceful human coexistence and a prerequisite for harmony between mankind and nature.**

### **Question 9**

**In what ways can planning and building protect the material resources and increase the spiritual resources of beauty and identity?**

## 10

### Convictions or excuses?

At the end of these observations, a sense of reality and modesty compels us to address the power and impotence of architecture.

Modesty obliges us not to accept impotence as an excuse so that we can carry on with business as usual because we are loath to change or have given up in resignation. Modesty requires that we recognise, describe and analyse the social facts of life and the political relations of power and keep a look-out out for possible areas of reform, be they large or small.

“Small-scale reforms” exploit the potential that exists in every work of construction in order to find a better solution under the given conditions and contractual relations and to work hard to implement that solution.

Architects, i.e. architects as a community, who have come together under the roof of the International Union of Architects for its XXI World Congress, can raise their voices and join other world organisations, in particular the United Nations, in fostering development that preserves values. This presumes that we have the courage of our own convictions and a determination not to resort to the customary “excuses”.

“If I don’t take on the job somebody else will”

“If it’s not built in my town it’ll be built down the road”

„If we agree on higher standards, the producers and markets will simply move into neighbouring economies“

**What is at stake, however, in both our personal attitudes and in scientific theory is a reversal of the scientific principle and a renunciation of the supposed rationality inherent in Modernism. As long as there was no scientifically based, empirical evidence for the harmfulness of a product, project or intervention it could be treated as harmless. That way of thinking must now be replaced by the principle of risk avoidance.**

**The participants in the 21st World Congress of Architecture will return home and reflect on what it would mean if the purpose of planning and building were to be the avoidance of risks for the material and spiritual world.**

### Question 10

**How are architects to take a stand when political changes are required, but when the realities of planning and building take the same old form?**

## Commentaries

### **Prof. Tay Kheng Soon, Singapore**

Views on the 'Questions'

The idea of questions-for-the-congress is excellent.

The congress's economic assumption is silent on Globalisation's growth paradigm remaining unquestioned. This needs to be at the centre of the discussion.

Architects cannot remain ignorant of the implications of the economic growth paradigm presently underpinning Globalisation. To premise our work solely on the materiality of architectural sensations is utterly foolish and ego-centric.

I urge the Congress to examine the Zero Growth, eco-regional economy for 'good life' paradigm of Herman E Daly and others like him. We need to go in that direction to achieve social and environmental justice with an architecture that takes seriously the job of saving on energy and materials and heals the soil, protects water and restores biota. The architect is an important facilitator of a process where communities are at the centre of effort in making a new economy based on of healing social rifts the wounded earth.

I agree that 'Beauty' must be our aim but premised on above. There can be no consensus on 'beauty' without healthy communities who share common values. The paranoia of individuals and cultures presently generates a wild appetite and desperation for difference. Much 'expressive' architecture today is wasteful of energy, materials and careless of nature. It is for ego.

**Prof. Matthias Sauerbruch, Berlin/London**

## Comments

"I like Mr. Ganser's text for its simple clarity. I do think that we need a text of this quality; however, I wonder in what respect the questions asked (and answers given) are really different from what we have heard since 1970 again and again. The issues of ecology and the protection of resources are of course important (despite the fact that they have been around for some time), but I find it difficult to talk about them in such a general way. Of course there is need for change on a global or at least a continental level, but are Architects powerful enough to change world politics?"

To introduce this ambition into the Congress will make anything which has actually been happening in the last two decades look compromised and insignificant. I think we should focus on our (more limited) radius of action. Of course we shouldn't lose sight of the overall picture and of course we should challenge decision makers and their preconceptions, but in the end this is a Congress of architects and an exchange of their insights and experiences. Mr. Ganser's text - by the way - sounds terribly anti-innovation, anti-spatial or formal expression, anti-anything that makes architecture fun. For me, the whole idea of construction is about a departure into the unknown and it is exactly this quality which makes architects love their profession. To want to eliminate all risks in this process is like wanting to take the mountains out of downhill-skiing.

This congress is also an opportunity to articulate and advertise the values which are being created through architecture and I find the generally defensive tone of Ganser's text quite unsuitable in this respect. Yes, of course there are many mistakes being made, but there is also a lot of potential which is being realised (and will continue to be realised) all over the world. Why not concentrate on the positive aspects of the task ahead? Let's bring out and support the potential of architecture rather than dwelling on its (many) shortcomings."

## Retrospective

### The XVIII UIA World Congress of Architects, Chicago 1993

Declaration of Interdependence for a Sustainable Future  
(excerpt)

In recognition that :

- A sustainable society restores, preserves, and enhances nature and culture for the benefit of all life, present and future; a diverse and healthy environment is intrinsically valuable and essential to a healthy society; today's society is seriously degrading the environment and is not sustainable;
- We are ecologically interdependent with the whole natural environment; we are socially, culturally, and economically interdependent with all of humanity; sustainability, in the context of this interdependence, requires partnership, equity, and balance among all parties;
- Buildings and the built environment play a major role in the human impact on the natural environment and on the quality of life; sustainable design integrates consideration of resource and energy efficiency, healthy buildings and materials, ecologically and socially sensitive land-use, and an aesthetic sensitivity that inspires, affirms, and ennobles; sustainable design can significantly reduce adverse human impacts on the natural environment while simultaneously improving quality of life and economic well being;

We commit ourselves, as members of the world's architectural and building-design professions, individually and through our professional organisations, to:

- Place environmental and social sustainability at the core of our practices and professional responsibilities
- Develop and continually improve practices, procedures, products, curricula, services, and standards that will enable the implementation of sustainable design
- Educate our fellow professionals, the building industry, clients, students, and the general public about the critical importance and substantial opportunities of sustainable design
- Establish policies, regulations, and practices in government and business that ensure sustainable design becomes normal practice
- Bring all existing and future elements of the built environment - in their design, production, use, and eventual reuse - up to sustainable design standards.

Olufemi Majekodunmi, President, International Union of Architects

Susan A. Maxman, President, American Institute of Architects

## **The XX UIA World Congress of Architects, Peking 1999**

UIA Beijing Charter (excerpt)

Coming to terms with our centuries

The 20th century: unparalleled construction and destruction

The 20th century has seen unprecedented magnificence and progress, and also incomparable calamity and confusion. The 20th century has enriched the history of architecture in its unique manner: architects have played an admirable role in the reconstruction that followed the two world wars; technical and artistic innovations on a massive scale have introduced fine examples of design to the populous like never before. But, this is not to deny that much of the built environment is still in a deeply unsatisfactory state. The very survival of humankind is under threat amidst squandering of the world's natural and cultural heritage. In affluent regions, redevelopment was often to become destruction by construction; in the poorer areas, pauperised masses are struggling to build their own cities of tomorrow. Over the past century, the world has turned into a very different place. Yet one thing remains the same: we architects are again at a cross roads as a world profession.

The 21st century: a turning point

The diversity and complexity of the world has created much confusion; yet it is but part of the eternal process of change. The present century has seen remarkable reform and development in politics, economics, technology, and society, and the resurgence of human ideas. In the coming century, the pace of transformation is expected to accelerate, though its direction may be even harder to tell. In the coming century, the coexistence of globalisation and pluralism will bring to a head the conflicts and the contradictions that characterise our age. On the one hand, modern means of communication have brought into close contact diverse cultures and traditions; global integration of production, finance and technology continues to dominate decision making. On the other hand, the gap between the rich and the poor is widening at an alarming rate; regional strife and financial uncertainties cast a sinister shadow upon the human habitat. Whilst we should not take on tasks outside our professional remit, it would be both irresponsible and foolish to ignore the torrent of social and cultural change that is redefining the scope of the architectural profession. A conscious reconsideration of the role of 21st century architecture calls for our enthusiasm, strength and courage.

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