

TG40 - Informal Settlements

Report on 1st Meeting

The first meeting of any newly established CIB Group is always a notable event, not least as an element in determining the future viability. The TG40 Coordinator, Liana Arrieta de Bustillos looks back at her Task Group's formal inception.

As she notes, the essence of TG40's concern is with the spontaneous habitat process as made by the inhabitants themselves, commonly called Informal Settlements. This Group was actually set up by CIB early in 1999 to devise the optimal answer to one of the most pressing current problems which currently confronts the human community.

The inaugural meeting to launch the new Task Group set in place the foundations for future cooperation and understanding among the researchers who have chosen to take part. This Meeting was arranged within the framework of the fifth Congress of Building Pathology and seventh Congress of Quality Control (CONPAT 99) at Montevideo, Uruguay on the 16th and 17th October 1999. Ana Inés De La Fuente, organiser of the CONPAT 99 introduced the aims of the Congress and explained the links with CIB TG40 and CIB W086.

Eight Countries Represented

38 participants from Uruguay, Paraguay, Venezuela, Cuba, Brazil, Argentina, Italy and the Netherlands came together to exchange ideas and opinions on this topic. Those attending the Meeting then introduced themselves and a series of papers from members were presented.

The first item featured CIB itself: its aims and objectives and the opportunities it offers to Latin American countries. This was presented by Wim Bakens, Secretary General of CIB, who gave an explanation about the Commissions and Task Groups and who stressed the desirability for communication and cooperation among all countries of the world.

During the 2nd part of this Meeting Liana Arrieta de Bustillos, the TG40 Coordinator, presented the background of TG40. She explained the Barquisimeto Declaration as the conclusions and recommendations of the 9th Annual Rinker International Conference on Building Construction and the International CIB Conference on Housing URVI 98 held on October 98 in Barquisimeto - Venezuela, where a group of researchers and CIB representatives gave careful thought to the feasibility and indeed necessity of establishing this Group.

Her statement of the aims and objectives of TG40 can be found on page 000 where an invitation to contribute to the meeting in the United Kingdom in April 2000 is also extended.

To return to the Montevideo meeting..

Visit to Informal Settlements in Montevideo

By way of a 'hands-on' experience, members had the opportunity to visit two Informal Settlements named "Barrios" in Uruguay. Here, Liana reports, they could see for themselves the different improvements in housing made by the inhabitants.

Future Perspectives - Short and Long term plans

She goes on:

"We have said that the basic results of TG40's work must be on display as an open forum at the end of the TG40 period when we will debate the results of the research. As a major step towards this, we intend to organise a large scale International Conference in Sao Paulo in 2002.

The very first action in the short term that TG40 is going to take is to stimulate participation by new CIB members in Latin America and African Countries, in working with Informal Settlements.

Our express purpose is to make TG40 something more than merely a set of members who take part in a series of meetings. What we are looking to activate is an on-going members' activity in the World Wide Web. Moreover, we want to encourage our members to come forward with genuine commitment to the Informal Settlements inhabitants.

In the short term we are going to develop an experimental www. Informal Settlement site, as the means to start collecting some of the information related to housing, work and development in informal settlements.

In the longer term, the political action should be initiated and enforced, in order to obtain interest and resources to activate what is, for the most part, a cultural action: a final report can generate a knowledge base capable of supporting future social and technological decisions about Informal Settlements.

Future Meetings

Following the meeting during the CARDO Conference, there will be a third meeting in Johannesburg, South Africa, on the 21st and 22nd August 2000. This meeting will be hosted by Mr. Mark Napier of the CSIR Division of Building and Construction Technology South Africa.

Another possibility is for the Group to meet as part of a CIB sponsored International Conference dealing with Construction Pathology and Quality Control in the Dominican Republic in October 2001.

Finally, arrangements are being made with the Escola Politecnica Universidade of Sao Paulo to try to organise an International Conference at the end of the TG40 work period in Sao Paulo - Brazil. This would take place in 2002.

The meeting concluded with an unanimous vote of thanks and appreciation to Ana Inés De La Fuente and Charna Furma of the University of the República of Uruguay, Montevideo, for their outstanding work in organising and hosting this first meeting."

Liana Arrieta de Bustillos

Further Information

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Opening Session of CONPAT 99 in Montevideo on 18th October 1999.

An impression of the well attended first TG40 Meeting in Montevideo, with Prof. Sergio Croce (W086 Coordinator) capturing the attention of about 40 attendees.



TG40 Members visited two Informal Settlements. Many different aspects could be seen including dwellings in an unsafe informal settlement prior to government intervention.

The Technical visit to informal settlements was concluded with a group photo of the TG40 participants together with some of the children living in the settlement.



Discussions preceded the signing of a letter of interest by the Rector of the University of Montevideo concerning CIB membership.