



XXV International Union of Architects (UIA)
World Congress DURBAN 2014

UIA 2014 DURBAN | ARCHITECTURE OTHERWHERE CONGRESS DECLARATION

ARCHITECTURE OTHERWHERE was an invitation to engage in meaningful professional conversations through reflection and debate on the Congress theme and sub-themes of resilience, ecology and values (practice/education).

It was also an opportunity to acknowledge issues relevant to South Africa and Africa with global relevance such as informal markets, public space and African practice. It was an opportunity to engage other professionals in debating the built environment as well as finding the interface between the various built environment professions where innovation may exist. It was a Congress rooted in the urban context of Durban, which became the laboratory for exploring these concepts.

“Architecture is political. Architecture is cultural. Architecture is social. Architecture connects.” Hilton Judin, UIA 2014 Scientific Committee Member

The outcomes of the Congress ranged from statements on global issues of concern to local and project level concerns. They also oscillated between theory and practice. The general sentiment of the Congress was that the role of architects and architecture needs to be broadened and become more relevant and inclusive. The general sentiment was also clear that a voice was needed in the profession with regards to global human suffering and the need for the profession to acknowledge that it had a role to play in supporting humanity to emerge from the political and social adversity evident in many parts of the world.

While architects have a strategic role to play on the global stage, they also have great socio-technical skills to operate at the local and project scale. Communities participating in the event ask for architects to partner with small-scale businesses and communities and to support small-scale livelihoods through their practice and advocacy work including lobbying City Managers for more effective service delivery. Public Officials called for Area Based Management and a slower, consultative process to be followed in decision-making at the City level.

“We cannot be on the wrong side of history.... Or prevent history from being made at our congress...” Mokena Makeka

UIA 2014 Durban was held in South Africa at a critical milestone in the country’s history as it celebrates 20 years of democracy. In South Africa, with its Apartheid past, we are critically aware of the power of the built environment to segregate and disadvantage communities. There has been a strong voice at UIA 2014 Durban Congress that has insisted the profession must speak up on how architecture and architects are sometimes complicit in spatial and built environment practices that disempower, humiliate, restrict opportunities, destroy livelihoods, damage eco-systems and disrupt economic networks. The built environment professions may sometimes deepen conflict and reinforce divisions. We – in the context of South Africa’s political history and landscape – understand that architecture and space have incredible power that may be harnessed in positive or negative ways.

“We would hope that the South African experience will inspire not only the Middle East but all other regions in conflict.” Mphethi Morojele



UIA 2014 Durban: Patron - Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu

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Towards these intentions, and as a reflection of these sentiments, UIA 2014 Durban states the following:

- # UIA 2014 Durban, through the theme of ARCHITECTURE OTHERWHERE, calls for the discovery of the in-between, the space, the interface, where other methods and systems of practice exist.
- # UIA 2014 Durban has re-enforced dialogue with other designers, built environment professionals and communities and has acknowledged that Innovation exists at the interface between different professions and also understands that real change in the built environment may only be achieved through the dissolving of the strict separation between professions and different role-players in terms of decision-making structures.
- # UIA 2014 Durban suggests new professional guidelines for interventions in the built environment, new systems, methods and technologies on how to achieve relevance and maximum impact.
- # UIA 2014 Durban calls for the re-assessment of professional values, professional engagement and the interrogation of the ethics associated with architectural practice.
- # UIA 2014 Durban has been – and will continue to be – a catalyst for transformation in our tools and methods of spatial practice in our cities.
- # UIA 2014 Durban calls for the restructuring of the relationship between the architectural community and its regulatory and voluntary bodies towards the achievement of transformation through greater representation – in the profession.
- # UIA 2014 Durban has suggested that solutions, new approaches and sustainable practice could be learnt from the African continent together with alternative forms of engagement and decision-making strategies.
- # UIA 2014 Durban acknowledges that spatial and socio-economic inequalities in our cities pose a real threat to progress and equity.
- # UIA 2014 Durban has reinforced thinking on the 4th dimension, that of “time”, within the built environment – and linked this conversation to ecological and social sustainability,
- # UIA 2014 Durban hopes that its outcomes will contribute towards South Africa’s VISION 2030 with special focus on Chapter 8 of the National Development Plan on Human Settlements and with a view towards Spatial Transformation.
- # UIA 2014 Durban has explored mainstreaming integrated and holistic urban economies with a focus on localized systems of (food) production and distribution.
- # UIA 2014 Durban calls for the development of guidelines for, and the promotion of, community-based architecture in South Africa and beyond.
- # UIA 2014 Durban calls for increased engagement and collaboration between the architectural profession and the various tiers of government.
- # UIA 2014 Durban acknowledges that we all have "special needs" at some point or the other in our lives – temporary or permanent – and that it is therefore necessary to adopt “universal design” and equal access in all building projects at all times.
- # UIA 2014 Durban acknowledges architecture is a profession that is critical to the development of cities that are more equitable, beautiful, functional and humane, and if harnessed correctly, may assist in the achievement of human settlements that increase people’s access to opportunities, offering them a better chance at improving their lives and livelihoods, while promoting social cohesion and integration.

Amira Osman
Hilton Judin
Mokena Makeka
Mphethi Morojele

UIA 2014 Durban Core Scientific Committee



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