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1. PROPOSAL

It is proposed that the RAIC submit to the UIA a formal proposal to establish a working programme on 'Human Rights and Architecture'.

2. PROCESS

Since the RAIC is a member of the UIA, CAHR is requesting that the RAIC make a formal presentation of this proposal to the UIA Council and Bureau. This is a request for administrative support from the RAIC, not financial support. Graeme Bristol is prepared to take on the responsibilities of content and organization in conjunction with the RAIC.

This summary provides the basic background for the proposal and a draft of the formal proposal ('UIA PROPOSAL') is attached for review. Additional information can be found on the CAHR website. It would be ideal to see something similar mirrored at the national level.

3. WHY HUMAN RIGHTS?

The question is often asked, 'what does architecture have to do with human rights?'

The principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights have important implications for architecture. Our understanding of rights necessarily affects the processes of architecture and, of course, the products of our efforts. Both improve when a human rights approach is taken to that process of design. Conversely, when we fail to recognize the human rights implications in our work, delays, design failure and worse are often the result.

Architects, engineers and planners are intimately involved in development and there are too many examples of failure. It has been estimated that there were 163 million people who had been forcibly displaced (2007 figures). At 65% (105 million) 'development-induced displacement' accounted for more forced evictions than all other causes combined (political persecution, disaster and conflict). This fact alone suggests a different approach to development – a rights-based approach. That approach opens up a number of avenues of exploration for research and has a number of positive implications for practice. A Working Programme in 'Human Rights and Architecture' is meant to build awareness in the profession about those implications.

4. WHY ANOTHER WORKING PROGRAMME IN THE UIA?

Presently the UIA has 3 Commissions: [Architectural Education](#), [Professional Practice](#) and [Competitions](#). There are now 12 Working Programmes:

Architecture and Society (9) – [Architecture and Children](#), [Architecture for All](#), [ARES - Architecture and Renewable Energy Sources](#), [Cultural Identity - Architectural](#)

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[Heritage, Educational and Cultural Spaces](#), [PHG - Public health](#), [Responsible Architecture](#), [Spiritual Places](#), [Sports and Leisure](#);
Urbanisation (2) – [Architecture and Tourism](#), [Intermediate Cities - Urbanisation and Development](#); and
Habitat (1) – [Action without borders](#)

There are two main reasons to add Human Rights and Architecture to this list of Working Programmes:

1. It can support a number of the other working groups in the application of rights particularly with children, architecture for all, culture/heritage, education, urbanisation, and professional practice
2. The UN and many other agencies now are demanding a rights-based approach (RBA) to development. The UIA has had a long-standing relationship with UNESCO and a number of other UN bodies. It is important for the profession to take a leadership role in implementing the RBA in the education and practice of the profession.

5. OBJECTIVES OF THE WORKING PROGRAMME

1. Supporting the other working programmes in recognizing the rights implications of urbanisation, energy, culture, children, humanitarian efforts, architectural education and professional practice
2. Encouraging the inclusion of human rights principles in the UIA/UNESCO Charter on Architectural Education, the UIA Accord on International Standards of Professionalism in Architectural Practice, the UIA Accord Policy on Ethics and Conduct, as well as similar national regulations and standards.
3. Organizing regular symposia on human rights and architecture (the first one of these was organized by CAHR and KMUTT in Bangkok in 2006)
4. Supporting continuing professional development courses on human rights and architecture
5. Implementing a rights-based approach in these five areas of intersection between architecture and human rights:
 - a. **Cultural Rights** – working with vulnerable communities in the protection of their cultural history
 - b. **Rights of access** – working with communities to overcome exclusion in the access to buildings, to resources and to the city
 - c. **Housing rights** – working with vulnerable communities to provide design alternatives to forced eviction especially through development-induced displacement
 - d. **Environmental rights** – working with vulnerable communities in the protection of traditional and legal land rights in the face of disaster and development as well as the protection of their rights to clean water and air.

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- e. **Workers' rights** – providing a safe haven away from construction sites for the children of migrant construction workers and improving their access to education and health care.

6. BACKGROUND

In 2011, the theme of World Architecture Day was 'architecture and human rights'. It is important to expand this focus on rights beyond a thematic 'day'. In 1998 Kofi Annan moved to integrate human rights throughout the UN system. The UIA can and should lead by example to show how this can be done in the architectural profession.

In addition to information available online (www.architecture-humanrights.org), CAHR has been working on these issues of human rights and architecture since 2002. In 2006, CAHR was formalized as a Canadian-registered non-profit organization. Along with a number of publications on these issues, Graeme Bristol, CAHR's ED, has been working with UNESCO to establish a [UNESCO Chair in Human Rights and Community Architecture](#), a proposal supported by the UIA (see [letter of endorsement, 31 JAN 2014](#)).

Finally, it is important for the RAIC to be the member institution proposing this new working group on human rights. Along with the recently opened Canadian Museum for Human Rights, historically Canada has had a long involvement with promotion and protection of peace, rights and democracy. John Humphrey, the Canadian legal scholar and jurist, was intimately involved in the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Louise Arbour was the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (2004-08) and currently Canada is represented on the UN Human Rights Committee by Marcia Kran. I would like to think that Canada, despite its many failings in the area of rights, remains steadfast in the protection and support of rights around the world. I would like to see the RAIC take this initiative to the global level by introducing the proposal to the UIA.



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