

## What ARC•PEACE did the last two years

At the meeting in Stockholm the secretary presented a report about the ARC•PEACE activities during the last two years. Despite the limited size of our organization the report shows that quite much has been achieved. The full report can be downloaded from the website. Here only a summary is included.

### Members

The secretary reported that ARC•PEACE had 11 registered member organizations at the time of the Barcelona meeting in 2008. Since then some have ceased to exist, for instance ARC•PEACE Aotearoa (New Zealand). Besides the organization members there are 45 individual members in 16 countries. Recently ARC•PEACE has got new members in India, Norway, Serbia and Spain.

### Follow up of Barcelona meeting

The meeting in Barcelona in April 2008 attracted 14 participants from 11 countries. Among other things it was decided to revise the ARC•PEACE Charter so that it fulfills more of a constitution, besides being a platform of our organization. The Barcelona meeting was combined with a seminar entitled "Are architects and planners obstacles to enabling housing strategies in low-income countries?". The papers from this seminar were edited into a book, which was later distributed to members and to the World Urban Forum in Nanjing in November 2008 and in ASF meetings.

### Khartoum meeting

In connection with Dick Vestbro's visit to Sudan in October 2009 ARC•PEACE Sudan arranged a lecture for the Sudanese Institute of Architects with Vestbro as the main speaker, a two-day training seminar for Sudanese profes-

sionals, and a special meeting with ARC•PEACE Sudan. The occasion was also used to plan for the Stockholm meeting and to discuss a facelift for the website.

### Public statements

During the period ARC•PEACE has adopted the following public statements:

1. *Architects and planners must take the global slum problem seriously* (May 2008).
2. *Israeli architects must stop designing illegal settlements* (May 2009).
3. *Those who pollute must commit themselves to greater reductions* (November 2009).

The one on design of illegal settlements was published on websites of Israeli and Palestinian organizations critical to Israel's violation of international law, besides being displayed on our website. It is estimated that ARC•PEACE statements have achieved very limited publicity due to a lack of a mass media strategy.

### Use of Yahoo list

Since 1999 ARC•PEACE is running a discussion list (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/arc-peace/>). In April 2010 the list had 74 members. Since November 1999 as many as 590 messages have been exchanged. The topics include revision of the Charter, the relationship between

the UN and NATO, statement about the Copenhagen meeting, the competition about the logo, military architecture in Israel/Palestine, and an appeal for the Cuban human rights defender Nestor Rodriguez. The Yahoo list could be used much more for pertinent professional and political discussions, especially since ARC•PEACE can meet physically only once every two years.

### Collaboration with ASF-Int

During the period ARC•PEACE has intensified its collaboration with Architecture Sans Frontières – International. Dick Vestbro has represented ARC•PEACE in the Board of ASF-Int and served as an active Secretary in this organization. During the last two years ASF-Int has increased to 18 members, extended its collaboration between members, produced a project portfolio, which also serves as an exhibition, and consolidated its position in other ways. ARC•PEACE has played a vital role in this development.



The General Assembly meeting of ASF-International in Grenoble, April 2009. Dick Vestbro represented ARC•PEACE at this meeting.

### Final reflections

The increase of slums around the world, and the lack of appropriate professional commitment to address the slum problems, points to the need for stronger social responsibility among architects and planners. Although the Cold War is over the threats of nuclear and other arms of mass destruction are not being reduced as they should. In the practice of architecture and planning professions to a large extent trends continue to show lesser social responsibility and weaker ethical considerations. Therefore organizations such as ARC•PEACE and ASF-Int are needed more than ever to advocate and intervene to bring

about a desirable change. However, both our networks are weak in many respects. Due to inadequate funds ARC•PEACE has not been able to establish a Secretariat with administrative staff. All our activities are based on voluntary work, which implies that our network, which is based mainly on email contact, is very vulnerable. The current unevenly distributed tasks make the situation even more

vulnerable. Therefore, it was thought necessary that Board members should volunteer themselves to take share the tasks as far as possible and there should be more equitable distribution of tasks among the members of the Ex.Co.

It was clearly realized that last two years has seen closer collaboration with like-minded organizations like ASF Int and ADPSR. This has greatly added to the strength of ARC•PEACE to work better towards the social goals, enhance capabilities at the grass-root and uphold ethics in our profession.

Dick Urban Vestbro