



## **International Symposium on Social and Economic Development in Old Cities Damascus (Syria), 10-12 July 2011 (new dates)**

### **CALL FOR PAPERS**

#### **Theme:**

Today, old cities are sometimes just neighbourhoods inserted in much wider modern metropolises. This is however where is concentrated architectural cultural heritage and is to be found a deep feeling of identity. Interventions for old cities conservation are much more difficult than the restoration of individual historical monuments, not only because of the quantity of physical structures to be restored or rehabilitated, but mainly because cities are living organisms, with a complexity of human and functional, social and economical aspects.

A diversified population that is sometime fragile, often ill known inhabits Old Cities. Many trades, sometime traditional, often small-scaled, are practised there. Cultural Heritage within is not built only. It may encompass crafts, art works and may be intangible. All this complexity contributes to the charm of Old Cities. However, mighty processes are at work to turn them into monofunctional areas: slum or gentrified, tourist or commercial neighbourhoods, museum towns, etc.

Social Development and equity imply to keep local communities into places, to preserve their balance and diversity, to improve their housing, their neighbourhood, their environment, their services and public facilities. Their information, their participation, their dynamics and their possible investment abilities are to be enhanced. Concurrently, cities need to evolve and develop if they are not to die or become stagnant places that lose their attractiveness.

Economic Development implies the safeguard of the built heritage and the inclusion in such places of non-harmful activities. An excessive pressure from tourist and commercial activities is to be avoided. Crafts and knowledge activities are to be encouraged. The conservation of heritage should support energy saving, promote local jobs and regenerate some construction processes.

There are probably no ready-made solutions, but we do know that the Social and Economic Development of Old Cities relies on revitalisation as well as on conservation and that its implementation has often to be comprehensive and always sustainable. The safeguard of Old Cities may include series of successive projects that ensure its visibility and credibility for the population. As a whole they do however generally participate in a long-term process and a strategy where the roles of public and private stakeholders should be complementary and harmonious.



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## Papers:

Presented communications should deal with Old City Social or Economic aspects (or both). This may include examples of good practices or case studies at different scales. They could be comprehensive, as in a City or a Conservation area or thematic, just focusing on housing improvement or the training of craftsmen for example. They should however indicate the policy, strategy, as well as the juridical, institutional and/or budgetary framework that make them possible. The Symposium papers will be published by MAM II as CD-Rom and presented on the CIVVIH website.

## Timetable:

CIVVIH members and international participants wishing to submit a paper should write a concise half page summary (1,500 signs) mentioning the title, in English or in French, with a brief 5 lines curriculum vitae. They should send it to the Scientific Committee (at [abdulac.sa@gmail.com](mailto:abdulac.sa@gmail.com)) before **10 May 2011**. The Scientific Committee will answer before **20 May**. A final version, with up to 6 illustrated pages (police Times 12, but for titlrs), should be sent no later than **20 June**.

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