

PRESS RELEASE

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Press Advisory of the Mega-Cities Project

The Mega-Cities Project

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Possible Solutions from Improbable Places

The Mega-Cities Project Launches MC² and Awards Emerging Young Leaders

Quito, Ecuador - October 17, 2016 - HABITAT III

The Mega-Cities Project will launch its next generation initiative MC² on October 18, 2-4pm, at Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, room R3. The panelists in this event are emerging leaders whose innovative work holds the potential to be scaled up into public policy or adapted in cities around the world. The panel will highlight the evolution of the Mega-Cities Project over the past 30 years towards its mission of shortening the time lag between ideas and implementation. MC², which derives its name from Mega-Cities² – Pure Energy, is being created to shorten the time lag for young leaders to reach their full potential for intergenerational collaboration.

As the Yoruba proverb says, “if we stand tall it is because we stand on the shoulders of our elders so we can see further ahead”. At Habitat II, we celebrated the 10th anniversary of the Mega-Cities Project, hosting the Local Coordinators from each of the 20 mega-cities in our network as well as the community participants who were part of the first ever Grassroots Innovation Exposition. At Habitat III, our goal is to accelerate the effectiveness of the next generation of young and emerging leaders by connecting them with this first cohort of leaders from the Mega Cities Project and other experiences leaders.

This Networking Event will showcase youth-led initiatives that show promise as system-challenging innovations that can be scaled into policy, replicated, and inspire others. Representatives of these initiatives will be invited to share with the group what they have already done and seek guidance from elder leaders and the attendees to learn how they overcame common obstacles. Through pre-Habitat III preparatory meetings, this Networking Event, and Post-Meeting, we will produce an implementation plan to ensure that this network has breadth, depth and endurance. These stages support bonding and bridging networks to strengthen emerging leaders and their initiatives. The panel will include: Dr. Janice Perlman, Founder and President of the Mega-Cities Project - USA; Brian English, Global Communities - USA; Gizele de Oliveira Martins, Youth Forum - Brazil; Francisco Sequeira Rankin, Observatory of Human and Autonomous Rights - Nicaragua; Mercedes Bidart, CIPPEC/MetroLab - Argentina; Ray Boyle, Our City - USA; Dan Koon-hong Chan, UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network – Youth - Hong Kong; and Jules Nguebou, ASSOAL Local Development Network - Cameroon.

“We cannot even begin to solve the challenges of urbanization without giving voice to those who have been stigmatized and ignored because they are young and poor,” said Dr. Janice Perlman. “Policy and practice can be transformed by converting the collective knowledge of “invisible” marginalized people into action. Just as the abundant creative energy in cities today

is stymied by the lack of access to the policy making process, there are many emerging leaders who cannot fulfill their potential or advance their new initiatives for lack of bonding and bridging networks.”

A press conference will be held on Wednesday, October 19, from 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm, at the Press Conference room. After the press conference, Dr. Perlman will sign copies of her book, *Favela: Four Decades Living on the Edge in Rio de Janeiro*. The book will soon be published in Portuguese.