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World Urban Forum Bulletin

A Daily Report of the Third Session of the World Urban Forum

Published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) in collaboration with the Globe Foundation and UN-HABITAT

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THIRD WORLD URBAN FORUM HIGHLIGHTS: THURSDAY, 22 JUNE 2006

On Thursday, participants at the third session of the World Urban Forum (WUF3) addressed the theme of urban growth and the environment during the morning plenary, followed by two dialogue sessions. Over 40 networking events were held in the afternoon addressing various aspects of sustainable human settlements development. In the evening, WUF3 participants attended the Global Hip-Hop Mainstage concert featuring international hip-hop and world music artists who raised awareness of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) through music and other artistic expressions.



Anna Tibajuka, UN-HABITAT Executive Director, with Curt Clarsky, UN-HABITAT Messenger of Truth, during the Global Hip Hop Mainstage held on Thursday evening

PLENARY

With a theme of "Urban Growth and Environment," the session was chaired by Chris Leach, President, Canadian Institute of Planners. In his opening address, he discussed planning for sustainable urbanization in Canada, including the need for networks of stakeholders to address sanitation, transportation, "smart" growth, water and environment. He reported on the World Planning Congress held earlier in the week, with 17 members pledging to form a network to address poverty, climate change and natural disasters.

Eveline Herfkens, Executive Coordinator, UN Millennium Campaign, recalled former UNEP Executive Director Klaus Töpfer's statement that poverty is the biggest polluter, and stated that it is essential to attack the roots of poverty in working towards sustainable development. Emphasizing sustainable and participatory pro-poor growth, Herfkens said the MDGs represent a global deal that needs to be implemented at the local level and that the past mistake of the donor community was to view the poor only as clients of development, as opposed to partners. Noting that this was the first generation with the knowledge and resources to put an end to poverty, Herfkens called for keeping the promises made at the highest political level and holding leaders accountable for building a more sustainable world.

Enrique Peñalosa, former mayor of Bogota, Colombia, mentioned that the number of urban inhabitants in developing

countries will grow by more than two billion over the next few years, and that they need to learn from the land-use planning experience of developed countries. He argued that, to achieve sustainability, developing countries must find a different model of growth. Referring to Bogota's experience, where car use had been reduced and greenways, bikeways and bus lanes added, he said this had resulted in major social justice improvements, in addition to providing environmental benefits.

Participants raised comments on cities being at the forefront of the major health and nutrition challenges, and on the fact that Colombian cities are faced with more severe problems such as violence, sanitation, and unemployment. Participants encouraged a focus on the MDG target on slum upgrading.

On the scale of change required to achieve sustainable development, Herfkens urged participants not to be intimidated by the need for revolutionary change. Peñalosa said that while resources were often available, political will was required to implement sustainable policies, and called for small steps that will lead to big changes.

Noting the lacuna in WUF3 to recognize the strong commitments made at the first Habitat Conference, one participant made an impassioned plea to realize historian Barbara Ward's vision that no one would be left without safe drinking water. It was noted that such a visionary future cannot be achieved through incremental change.

The *World Urban Forum Bulletin* is a publication of the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) <info@iisd.ca>, publishers of the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* <enb@iisd.org>. This issue was written and edited by Xenya Cherny, Leonie Gordon, Sarah Stewart Johnson, William McPherson, Ph.D., Laurel A. Neme, Ph.D., Sabrina Shaw, Peter Wood, and Kunbao Xia. The Photographer is Leila Mead. The Digital Editors are Bo-Alex Fredvik and Diego Noguera. The Editor is Pia M. Kohler, Ph.D. <pia@iisd.org>. The Director of IISD Reporting Services is Langston James "Kimo" Goree VI <kimo@iisd.org>. Funding for coverage of this meeting has been provided by the Globe Foundation of Canada. IISD can be contacted at 161 Portage Avenue East, 6th Floor, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 0Y4, Canada; tel: +1-204-958-7700; fax: +1-204-958-7710. The opinions expressed in the *Bulletin* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of IISD. Excerpts from the *Bulletin* may be used in other publications with appropriate academic citation. Electronic versions of the *Bulletin* are sent to e-mail distribution lists (HTML and PDF format) and can be found on the IISD RS Linkages WWW-server at <<http://www.iisd.ca/>>. For information on the *Bulletin*, including requests to provide reporting services, contact the Director of IISD Reporting Services at <kimo@iisd.org>, +1-646-536-7556 or 212 East 47th St. #21F, New York, NY 10017, USA. The IISD team at the Third World Urban Forum can be contacted by e-mail at <xenya@iisd.org>.



Hip-hoppers lay out conscious rap at WUF

By Adrian Mack

Publish Date: June 15, 2006

Speaking to Mother Jones magazine prior to the 2004 US Election, Public Enemy's Chuck D beefed, "We don't see the people who are doing real things getting enough props. We often see politicians who are everywhere but nowhere at the same goddamn time.... You see them everywhere on television but nowhere in front of your face." Next Thursday (June 22), Vancouverites will have the opportunity to witness a rare exception to the rule. Props will be given, and plenty of them. Furthermore, politicians "from all over the world, no less" will appear right in front of your face.

As part of the World Urban Forum 3, hosted by Vancouver this month, the event's youth organizing committee has scheduled what it's calling the Global Hip-Hop Mainstage, located at the Earth: World Urban Festival Site at 555 Great Northern Way. It will act as the culmination of the committee's efforts to ensure that youth-led initiatives are integrated into the five-day conference, during which a range of international delegates representing governments, NGOs, community leaders, and academics will hammer out sustainability initiatives. As worthy as that all sounds, the Global Hip-Hop Mainstage should also prove to be a hell of a party, offering a roster of international artists including Madcon & Equizez, Zuluboy, Tumi and the Volume, and more who have been recognized as leading exponents of conscious rap.

"The important thing is we aren't deciding to bring hip-hop here," explains World Urban Forum media and communications coordinator Jess Conn-Potega. "Hip-hop keeps coming up. Young people in cities all over the world are choosing hip-hop as their medium, so it needs to be a part of the World Urban Forum. It's not a choice we're making. It's a choice young people are making. Hip-hop is incredibly intertwined in their self-identity."

Conn-Potega's words are echoed by 25-year-old Joseph Oyoo, aka Gidi Gidi, of Mainstage headliners Gidi Gidi Maji Maji. "First of all, hip-hop music is one thing that has brought the world together," he says, wresting himself away from a World Cup match to speak to the Straight from his home in Nairobi. "Especially where young people are concerned, because young people are honestly and vibrantly open to hip-hop music. They are ready to accept it. It's all about who you are, what you represent, and what you have to offer."

Kohinoor, another Mainstage participant who was orphaned during the bloody Bangladesh war in 1971, and subsequently adopted by a family in Norway, speaks to the power of conscious rap to uplift and educate in the developing world.

"I was in Jamaica," she recalls, during a call from Oslo. "And I could see they knew a lot more about the lyrics of different artists than what was in their schoolbooks. Somehow, when you can sing things in your head, the message is more easily taken, I think."

A notable addition to this year's World Urban Forum is the integration of the World Youth Forum, something Conn-Potega characterizes as "a preparatory preconference for youth, so that young people can get together, define some goals, and figure out how to have the most impact on the forum itself". This is meant to serve as a corrective to the last WUF, in Barcelona in 2004, where the youth component found itself marginalized. "Essentially, it was 'Sit at the kids' table,'" Conn-Potega says. "Here's your little conference over here, we're going to do our real conference over here, and we might let you in. Our message is that youth are leaders of today and tomorrow."

Significantly, with Vancouver as the forum's host city, Conn-Potega offers a fact both sobering and often overlooked. "I think Vancouver was chosen because it's consistently rated as one of the most livable regions in the world," he starts. "The exception to that is if you're in the indigenous community here, in which case it's about 78th in the world."

Enter Curtis Clearsky. Clearsky is another Mainstage performer, a Vancouverite from the Ojibway and Blackfoot nations. The rapper is more than familiar with the challenges that face Canada's Native population.

"I hit rock bottom about a thousand times," Clearsky says with a laugh, recalling lost years of alcohol and drug abuse, as well as dealing.

As an emerging figure in the Native hip-hop world with a firm grasp on the profile of hip-hop on this continent, he sighs when he describes being rebuked by a young cousin for not aping the dark narratives of 50 Cent.

"A lot of people are trying to put the image out there of being the tough guy," he says. "I don't really give a damn about being a gangsta! I'm a man! I'm a man with a lot of respect for myself, my children, my family, and my community. This ain't no fairy tale. It's real life."

Clearsky's community work has involved a stint as project coordinator at Vancouver's Knowledgeable Aboriginal Youth Association, where hip-hop is utilized in a myriad of positive ways, from break-dancing workshops to the production of indigenous hip-hop compilations. More recently, Clearsky has been recognized by the UN as one of its Messengers of Truth, and he'll be honoured at the top of the Mainstage program on Thursday. As such, he'll help promote the UN's Millennium Development Goals, which include reducing extreme poverty in the world to reducing HIV infection rates.

Conn-Potega says that, in the large picture, conscious rap thrives as an enormous, worldwide, grassroots phenomenon.

"The community-engagement side of hip-hop has been absolutely flourishing," he reports. "As we've been doing this work, we've been finding there's thousands of organizations all over North America and the rest of the world that have been using hip-hop in their work... There's so many organizations that are using hip-hop as an outreach tool and as a focus of their work with young people."

"Other forms of music can impart energy," Conn-Potega concludes, "but for imparting actual, specific messages, hip-hop is simply unparalleled."

Being something of an inaugural world block party, the Global Hip-Hop Mainstage event will no doubt offer plenty of both.

Source URL:

<http://www.straight.com/article/hip-hoppers-lay-out-conscious-rap-at-wuf-0>



Clearsky Named UN Messenger

By Martin Turenne

Publish Date: July 21, 2005

Last week, the United Nations Human Settlements Program selected local MC Curtis Clearsky as one of a handful of international Messengers of Truth, a group of artists chosen for their ability to reach young people with their music. As the project coordinator for the Knowledgeable Aboriginal Youth Association, Clearsky is no stranger to tackling serious issues in his community, and the UN induction represents a tremendous opportunity to spread his conscious rhymes to a wider audience. Alongside representatives from Africa, Europe, and South America, the B.C. rapper will spend the next year raising awareness about poverty, education, and many other issues facing young people at home and abroad. These efforts will culminate in the World Urban Forum, scheduled to be held in Vancouver next June.

Discussing the honour with the *Straight*, Clearsky—who's currently working on his debut album—argues that hip-hop unifies the cause of disenfranchised peoples everywhere. "The UN has recognized hip-hop as a key communication tool for urban youth all over the world," he said. "Native youth has the highest negative statistics when it comes to teen pregnancy and imprisonment, and hip-hop has always addressed those issues. If I can help be a mentor and give validation to the young people around me, I'm hopeful that will help move the community forward in a positive direction."

Source URL:

<http://www.straight.com/article/clearsky-named-un-messenger>



Hip-Hop against armed SkyTrain cops

By Matthew Burrows

Publish Date: November 17, 2005

Brian Williams works in Burnaby with youth on probation. On Friday (November 18) at 8 p.m., Williams and youth organizer **Sara Kendall** will see the fruits of their labour: a hip-hop/dialogue event organized to protest against armed **SkyTrain** cops.

Williams told the *Straight* that as a youth worker, he hears countless stories of young people, mostly First Nations youth, claiming they have been targeted and harassed by police. "Increasing the firepower of SkyTrain authorities is decreasing young people's sense of security," Williams wrote in a news release. "With this event, we are creating a space where, as youth, we can develop positive solutions for safety and the safety of others."

Also on the bill are **Kinnie Starr** and rapper **Curtis Clearsky**. The latter is part of East Side group **Knowledgeable Aboriginal Youth Association**. The event, called **Increase the Peace**, takes place at Open Studios (252 East 1st Avenue). It is a drug- and alcohol-free evening, and admission is by donation.

Source URL:

<http://www.straight.com/article/hip-hop-against-armed-skytrain-cops>

NEW WORLD ORDER

CURTIS CLEARSKY TALKS ABOUT HIS NEW ALBUM

TELL ME A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF.

Well I'm twenty eight years old, born and raised on Coast Salish Indigenous Territory, also known as Vancouver.

OK, WHEN DID YOU START BECOMING INVOLVED WITH MUSIC?

I've always loved music; I grew up listening to my parents' classic rock. I discovered hip hop when I was around twelve. I first heard Kool Moe Dee and Public Enemy. I'd have to say that they were a huge influence on me.

TELL ME ABOUT YOUR BAND, THE DIGNIFIED.

Well we are a rock/hip hop group formed in 2006. I was approached by Remy Devries (a fellow musician) after doing a show and he recommended that I go live, so I tried it out and I loved it. It brought a whole new element to performing with live drum, bass and guitar has been amazing. We did our first show on Aboriginal Day in Vancouver and our performances keep getting better and better.

TELL ME ABOUT THIS NEW CD, WHAT WENT IN TO MAKING IT?

Blood sweat and years. Remy Devries is the brains behind the music composition. I wrote and sang all the lyrics. It's been a long awaited project. We definitely compliment each others' talents and I'm very thankful and feel blessed to work with such a great musician.

Remy is a Cree brotha who grew up in east Vancouver too, he's a multi-instrumental musician who has been playing for over twenty years. He has played with some of the best Indigenous artists around.



WHO INSPIRES YOU AND WHY? WHERE DO YOU GET YOUR CREATIVITY FROM?

I'm inspired by great people - Malcolm X, Muhammad Ali, 2pac, The Hurricane, Che Guevara, these are warriors, champions and kings, they are great examples to me and I strive to lead a healthy, great life like these people.

I am thankful and believe that I am blessed with the ability to write and express my lyrics. I also acknowledge that the spirits guide these lyrics on to the paper and out through my voice and into the ears of those who need to hear it. I feel like an instrument of message. I'm inspired musically by many great vocalists like Chuck D, Anthony Keidis, Bob Marley, and of course 2pac.

HOW LONG DID IT TAKE YOU TO MAKE THIS NEW CD?

Well, it's taken a lifetime to gather it together but it took us seven days in total to record it.

DID YOU HAVE TO PUT YOUR OWN MONEY INTO IT?

Yes it's all independent with support from a few brothaz and sistaz who've supported us.

WHERE IS IT GOING TO BE DISTRIBUTED?

It's going to make its way into reservations, ghettos and slums worldwide on a grassroots level. I'm down for getting it out on a massive level through a label, but in the meantime I am down for networking with the people who work to improve their communities world wide and getting it out to them.

The reason I take it from this approach is because I am focused on getting the music to the people who it is meant for.

Do you have any advice to other young aspiring aboriginal artists out there?

Attain, maintain and sustain.

DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING ELSE YOU'D LIKE TO ADD?

Peace and blessings to all my brothaz and sistaz, stay solid!

Check out the webspace for more info: www.myspace.com/curtisclearsky

NEW TRIBE is giving away a copy of The Dignified CD, Warrior Mode and a Dignified T-shirt. Email us at newtribepaper@yahoo.com to enter the draw.



World Urban Cafe & DOSE PRESENTS

THE GLOBAL HIP HOP MAINSTAGE

FREE OUTDOOR HIP-HOP CONCERT! THURSDAY JUNE 22nd, 2006 7:00pm

Featuring dope MC's, and DJ's from four continents!

Tumi & The Volume (SA)

Zuluboy (SA)

Kohinoor (Bangladesh)

Bapsure Bishu' (Turkic Island)

Karpe Blem (India, Egypt)

Fem One & Nico (Norway)

& **UN HABITAT Messengers of Truth:**

Gidi Gidi Maji Maji (Kenya)

Madcon (Norway)

Curtis Clearsky (Turkic Island)



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