



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Penn IUR Shapes World Agenda on Urban Issues

NAPLES, ITALY (Sept. 6, 2012)-- Penn IUR Co-Director Eugenie Birch was re-elected co-chair of the UN-HABITAT's World Urban Campaign (WUC), a global coalition of public, private, and civil society partners acting to promote sustainable urbanization. Dr. Birch's re-election underscores Penn IUR's prominent position in the global conversation on urban issues.

WUC was launched in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2010, at UN-HABITAT's 5th World Urban Forum (WUF), the world's premier conference on cities. Dr. Birch was re-elected at the 6th WUF, held in Naples, Italy Sept. 1-7, where the thousands of attendees learned about Penn IUR research and publications through an exhibit and several presentations by Dr. Birch.

As co-chair of the WUC, Dr. Birch helped launch the "Manifesto for Cities" at a Sept. 1 special session that included presentations by Dr. Birch, UN-HABITAT Executive Director Joan Clos, and others. The manifesto provides a platform for the creation of a Global Urban Agenda, in preparation for World Habitat III, the UN's much anticipated conference on housing and sustainable urban development scheduled for 2016. The manifesto emphasizes the prominence of cities in today's world, and holds that "the battle for a sustainable future will be won or lost in cities."

Dr. Birch presented Penn IUR research on sustainable urban development indicators at a WUF networking session on Sept. 3 entitled "Sustainable urbanization: using indicators to measure progress." At the session, co-sponsored by the Commonwealth Association of Planners and the U.S. Government, she described Penn IUR's Ford Foundation-sponsored research identifying quantifiable "livability principles" for the Partnership for Sustainable Communities, a federal partnership among three U.S. federal agencies: Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Department of Transportation (DOT) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Dr. Birch also presented a paper entitled "Ports and Energy, Laboratories of the Future" at an auxiliary meeting on "Ports as Hotspots of Creative Activity," at the University of Naples Federico II.

Penn IUR mounted an exhibit to present current research, recent publications in its City in the 21st Century book series, and innovative projects from the City of Philadelphia in the WUF exhibition hall, which is open to all conference attendees and the public. Penn IUR staff discussed with visitors the Institute's research on vacant land studies, energy efficiency initiatives, and sustainable urban development indicators, as well as Philadelphia's innovative Greenworks sustainability plan and the City's efforts to foster the creative economy and improve access to fresh food.

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) – a United Nations agency that promotes socially and environmentally sustainable cities with the goal of providing adequate shelter for all – organized WUF. WUF is held every two years to bring together leaders from government, NGOs, research, and the private sector to help solve problems of urban sustainability.

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