

THEMATIC SESSION 5: Engaged Citizens

Session organized by the City of Johannesburg

Date: 18 July 2013

Time: 16:30 – 18:00

Venue: Ballroom 2

PROGRAM

Opening: Facilitator, **Prof. Steven Friedman**, Director, Centre for the Study of Democracy, Rhodes University and Johannesburg University

Speakers:

- **Dr. Barbara Lipietz**, Lecturer, University College London
- **Rose Molokoane**, Shack/Slum Dwellers International (SDI)
- **Michael Müller**, Berlin's Senator for Urban Development and the Environment
- **Marina Klemensiewicz**, Secretariat for Habitat and Inclusion of the Government of the City of Buenos Aires

Summary of key issues by facilitator

Panel discussion and Questions from audience: Panelists

SUMMARY

Community participation is considered fundamental to fair and representative decision making in contemporary urban planning practice. It is often argued that the voices of the traditionally voiceless (e.g. poor and minority groups) are critical if plans are to succeed in achieving equity, efficiency and sustainability. However the participation of poor and disadvantaged groups in planning processes is difficult to achieve particularly where programmes are located in powerful political and bureaucratic structures.

The session would explore some of the more interesting/progressive cases of participation and engagement as an entry point into participatory processes at scale. Good examples of participation (i.e. extensive, that go beyond processes of consultation) are difficult to identify. This is in itself telling, but it may be as useful, therefore, to look for interesting practices from a slightly different angle, that is to focus on practices that are truly participatory, that are operating at scale (i.e. beyond neighbourhoods or even districts), that have impact in terms of actually shaping policies/ budgets/ practices, etc.) - and then reflecting on how such practices could be incorporated into city-wide planning. Lessons from the field are needed in order to better explore and debate pragmatic solutions.

BACKGROUND QUESTIONS

- What are the international examples of citizen participation?
- How best can cities develop inclusive participatory practices?