

Kaczorowski continues follow-up work of Habitat II

"Mary Rose Kaczorowski, Common Ground-USA's Non Governmental Organization representative to the June 1996 United Nations-sponsored Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), continues her follow-up work through the Huairou Commission. Kaczorowski is also the Director, Ft. Bragg Branch of The Henry George School of Northern CA.

Immediately following the August 1997 Council of Geogist Organizations conference in S. Plainfield, NJ, Kaczorowski and Pat Aller attended a Secretariat meeting in New York City of the Huairou Commission & The Super Coalition of Women Homes & Communities.

Kaczorowski presented the following "Bringing Habitat Home" comments. She is now working on formulating strategies for networking and collaborative forums regarding land access & public finance mechanisms.

BRINGING HABITAT HOME ***Our Practices...Economic Empowerment***

by Mary Rose Kaczorowski, August 1997

The issues of equity and Womens' fundamental right to own, inherit, control and sustain tenure of land and buildings took center stage at the Habitat II Conference in Istanbul. In Istanbul, we demonstrated the ever increasing influence of grassroots Women. Formulating

continued on page 9

continued from page 9

taxes regarding land, consumption and production must be understood. We must understand the game plan—the current capitalistic paradigm and land's (including natural resources) role in it to create the institutional and legal reforms that currently bind us in the chains of inequity. We cannot depend on Band-Aids of programs here and there where we target the most wounded. In laypersons terms, the fundamental problem is that market economics does not guarantee equity. Revolutions, uprisings and wars fill our history books and news. Unless we take a serious look at the root of inequities — unequal access to land— (land that we need for the means of production, land where we need to grow food, land where we need to access water, land that we need for shelter) any charters

or great plans, no matter how worthy, will remain on pieces of precious resources, namely paper. As we know, there are already models of micro-enterprises and cooperatives that operate successfully in a market economy that are sustainable and environmentally friendly. The question is why do we not have more? Behind almost every brilliant model and proposed project, two key problems arise: * 1) How do we get access to land or a building? * 2) How to set up a continual finance mechanism—or How to keep the money coming in? Examples: Economists have long recognized that local authorities are burdened with far more costs than they can meet with their present taxing powers. Others recognize that the constitutional jungle has created a situation where potentially useful land is locked out of the market—conditions

that create inequities and hold the land as hostage. Simply put, the unimaginative and outmoded site development of public regulation bodies have produced disastrous consequences—excessive costs, inefficient land use, stereotyped plans, and the destruction of natural amenities. Rent as a public revenue policy or land value taxation had been discussed and adopted as a feasible public finance mechanism by a consortium of NGOs at the Habitat II Prep. Comm. in New York, and in Istanbul was included in the recommended Habitat II Draft that was submitted to the Secretariat with recommendation to be adopted in the final text. We recommend that the Super Coalition of Women, Homes and Community explore this model, which in various forms have resulted in beneficial land access and land use results.

Legislation in Pennsylvania has provided some practical guidance and results. In Nairobi, The Mathare 4-A Program featured their success story at the Women's Tent on African Women's Day. We offer the proposition for a Super Coalition of Women, Homes and Community Structural Adjustment Policies Explorative Workshop at the September 1997 NGO UNDP Forums. Alanna Hartzok will be available to facilitate this forum, supported by Pat Aller. Mary Rose Kaczorowski can provide supportive material—particularly in following the Mathare 4-A Project. Judith Vidaver has expertise on resource / environmental impacts, particularly regarding regional watersheds. The time is now to begin to tackle the implementation aspects of the vision. This can be a first step. Our future depends upon it.