Discussion

Ismail Serageldin: I didn't get an answer to my question in terms of the rich and the poor and the gaps between them in terms of consumption, but let me expand our focus to broader issues. Yolanda Kakabadse has been doing much thinking about global environmental issues and issues of community. We talk nicely in slogans: "Think globally and act locally" and so on. And yes, every reality is spatially defined, and that is part of what settlements are all about. But what are the consumption patterns we are already witnessing today, and the consumption patterns we will see with increased urbanization, in terms of vitalization and in terms of greenhouse gas emissions, and what are they likely to do to the sustainability of cities? Indeed is "sustainable cities" an oxymoron, or is it feasible?

Yolanda Kakabadse: Consumption patterns. I would like to bring up an issue that is quite important with relation to consumption, which is cultural identity and how we see consumption. What do we think that consumption is about, and thus how would we measure whether we are already in a consumption pattern? What are the limits? These may be defined differently for each culture.

I would like to show you a newspaper article that came out recently, but before I do that I would like to ask for a show of hands. How many Americans are there here?

Audience question: In the United States, or the continent?

Yolanda Kakabadse: I said Americans.

Ismail Serageldin: Sense of identity.

Yolanda Kakabadse: That was good. Yesterday or the day before yesterday this statement was published: "Mr. President, 95 U.S. senators and millions of Americans cannot be wrong." I was not asked. I am an American. I am an Ecuadorian. You are a Chilean, you are a Colombian, and you are an Argentine—were you asked? This is an example of cultural misperception, and the lack of sensitivity to other people's identities, and this relates to how we have to deal with very important issues such as consumption.

We tend to generalize too much, and we tend to come to the table with formulas, accusations, and positions that do not really reflect the interests of the different communities and, in this case, of the urban communities of our continent. This is a very important point for all of us to make when we try to define the interests of the communities of the cities. There are so many interests, there are so many sensitivities, there are so many elements that have to do with culture and traditions, and with all that accompanies them. It is quite difficult to come up with a 60-second answer to the question of consumption in our cities.

Editor's note: Names of participating audience members were included when the names were audible to the transcriber.

Ismail Serageldin: The minister of Denmark was right, everybody is a politician. We now have the opportunity for audience participation. I have many additional questions about the ecological footprint that we cast, depending on which part of the world we are talking about, and what consumption patterns we follow, and the rural and urban divides that exist, and whether these patterns of discrimination, which are easily demonstrated by statistics, are acceptable or not—and whether they are challenged by the meaning of solidarity. Can we have solidarity, not just with the communities we live among, our neighbors, and even the world today, but also with future generations, and even with other species? These were some of the questions we were addressing earlier today.

Jeremy Wright: It has been said that there are two cities. There is the physical city that we see: the concrete, the bricks, the mortar, the roads, and the pollution. There is also an inner city of dreams, of poetry, and so on. And that if we are going to redevelop a community, we should start with dreams and poetry and end with real estate. I have heard the panel discuss various aspects of the concrete form, the social form, and the economic form of cities. I have heard some hope expressed that cities might become places where there is much poetry, joy, and personal growth, where there is a sense of belonging to the city, where you live in quiet and safe neighborhoods, and where your children can run around safely. These are common values that I think everybody espouses to some degree.

When we are speaking about the rich and the poor, what exactly do we mean? At the moment we see a growing division between rich and poor that is unbridgeable—where riches have to do with unbridled materialism, the global casino, and vast fortunes, where the economic efforts of citizens are siphoned off and second-round multiplier effects take place outside the community in which the source of wealth was originally developed.

Today Main Street has gone, and what I buy does not feed the butcher, the baker, or the candlestick maker. It goes into the pockets of some corporation whose shareholders I do not know and whose interests are not particularly linked to leaving a safe, socially healthy, and environmentally sound community—where the butcher buys from the baker, who buys from the candlestick maker.

So I would like to ask the panel if there is a fundamental conflict to be resolved here between the languages of poetry and the languages of economics? What are we talking about when we talk of developing communities, and basing these on new value-driven systems, rather than on an economic, greed-based system?

Miguel Altieri: It is interesting that when we talk about cities, few people acknowledge that urban agriculture is a very important part of many, many cities. According to the latest United Nations Development Programme report there are about 80 million farmers in cities, and many cities in Africa, Latin America, and Asia derive about 40 percent of their food from these urban agricultural systems.

Cities in which there has been major crisis, for example Havana, where most economic aid was cut off in 1989, have gone into urban agriculture in a massive way. Similarly, in Sarajevo I understand that there are urban gardens, promoted during the time when everything was cut off from the city because of inaccessibility.

And it is a growing movement in the United States. There are neighborhoods where all the big food stores have left because there is no market for them, and urban agriculture has emerged as a way of ensuring nutrition for those poor communities. This has happened in California—in Oakland where I live, and in the Bay Area. Urban agriculture has had other effects, beyond just producing food and ensuring food security—it has healed the neighborhoods in many ways.

If we are looking for mechanisms for healing and linking communities, urban agricultural programs are showing that they can help. Youth who would otherwise be involved with drugs and violence, now turn to productive, creative activities, and they also come to appreciate nature and to understand the complexities of ecological systems.

In your opinion, is linking communities to the land, possibly through agricultural activities in the cities, which can take many forms—from roof agriculture and cultivation in abandoned

plots to reforestation of the urban forest—and engaging students, children, the elderly, and others, a mechanism that would lead to solutions for urban problems and to this solidarity that Ismail is proposing?

Audience question: Several of the speakers have alluded to, or given the impression that there is greater solidarity among the poor, less advantaged groups in society than among the more affluent. I hope this is not just romanticizing poverty. It may very well be the case. But Yolanda Kakabadse also commented that affluence tends to lead toward greater individualism. And the implication is that this engenders less solidarity, at least within the immediate community.

Those of us engaged in international development naturally are pushing for affluence, or something that approaches it. Is there a contradiction here? I am wondering whether it is a bad thing to become more individualistic? Even the affluent have solidarity. It may be with their church, with their professional group, or, for some people, with the whole world, but certainly with more than their immediate community. In a modern, hopefully more affluent world, is it valid to think in terms of a solidarity that does not refer to immediate neighborhoods?

Ismail Serageldin: That is a good question. I think, too, that there would be those who, based on their experience in many cities, would challenge the assumption that crime, violence, and breakdown is always to be found in poorer neighborhoods, while civic activity and responsibility only seem to thrive in other, richer neighborhoods. The situation is not clear-cut.

Wally N'Dow: I will talk first of all about urban agriculture. I think there is definitely a place for the expansion of urban agriculture in most cities. In times of civil crises people resort to it in order to survive! As an adaptive strategy it keeps many people alive. In times of joblessness urban agriculture also plays a big role in creating livelihoods and generating income. It is expanding fast in many developing countries and today feeds millions of people around the globe. It is a striking reality in the big cities of Asia, and in Africa as well. We should encourage urban agriculture, and our own work in Habitat II has pressed for new ways to encourage and expand it. I do not know how relevant it is in terms of the "healing process" after civil wars and strife. I do not have much experience in that connection. You mention Sarajevo, and perhaps there is a way to use it in such situations.

On the second point, let me say a few words about the seeming duality, or even conflict, between individualism and solidarity. In this day of globalization, whether we are individuals or nations, the times are characterized by competition and contest—for markets, for profits, and so on. And if we do not temper this competition with human solidarity, the end result will be catastrophe for millions of people who will lose jobs and social security. Where the traditional cohesiveness of societies is being broken, we see that companies are becoming less loyal to their workforces, and millions are being abandoned because companies are relocating elsewhere, or restructuring, or downsizing.

I believe that this element of human solidarity is today more critical than ever, and I believe that it represents a part of the answer—not the total answer, but the determining part of the answer—to some of the negative effects and consequences of economic globalization. How do we turn this awareness of the need for a new solidarity into a historical project for raising consciousness about the importance of social capital, about sharing, about cohesiveness, about what unites us, and about what disunites our societies and our world? How do we create this new wave of concern for solidarity?

How do we make real the old injunction (and I tremble to say this in the presence of the Archbishop of Cape Town and the Rabbi of Washington), "love thy neighbor." Basically, that is what the Bible is all about. That is what the Koran is all about, and the Torah. "Love thy neighbor." Three words!

Audience comment: I believe that solidarity is created with those who help meet basic human needs. What are basic human needs? They are shelter, housing, sanitation, education, food, and water. So solidarity could be built with government, with religious faith, with ethnic community, or something else. But I think basic

human needs are the bottom line for solidarity building.

Audience comment: I am Polish and I would like to say a few words about solidarity, which in a way is a Polish invention. As you probably remember, the Solidarity movement was born in the Lenin Shipyards in Gdansk, in the summer of 1980 during the heyday of communism. And it defeated communism without firing a shot. How did the people perform this miracle? Precisely by addressing the basic question of solidarity. Solidarity essentially means respect for our neighbor, respect for other human beings. With this respect we can solve many human problems, and that is why Solidarity was such a fantastic success.

During the 1981/82 academic year I went around the world on a sabbatical, lecturing and meeting people. Everywhere I went, every day, I heard and read about Solidarity. Especially in the Far East where it was a revelation to people who had never heard about the dignity of the individual. That is why it is so important and so relevant that when we discuss the problems of the cities we speak about solidarity.

Audience comment: Your comments have brought to mind two quotations, which I would like to paraphrase. One is by Albert Einstein, who said that perfection of means and confusion of goals seems to characterize our age. The second is by Winston Churchill: when Europe was being rebuilt after World War II, Churchill observed that we shape our communities in buildings, and then they shape us.

We are talking today about two things that are actually in contradiction. We are talking about cities as we know them and as they are becoming, and we are talking about human settlements. For the most part, these two things are not the same. Our cities are not human settlements. They are just settlements. And I think we have to begin thinking about and asking ourselves what human settlements are. Some of the comments we have heard today are starting to do that. Human settlements include a lot of different things. They include the need for nature—both functionally and spiritually. They include social needs—the sense of community, the basic needs of food and infrastructure. They are influenced by the human life cycle—from birth, through the milestones of life, to death.

We need to look at some of these basic things, and then begin to deal, as Churchill implied, with how we integrate these elements into the way we live, our communities, and our neighborhoods. Ultimately, we are influenced by what we build. Frank Lloyd Wright once said that the built environment was frozen music. I would take it further and say that the built environment is frozen philosophy, revealing what we believe in, what we see as important. These are some things we need to think about when we speak about human settlements.

Audience comment: I am a native person from the rain forest, and my people are the Apurinam. I believe we do not need to look for solutions to the major problems that we are discussing in the Bible, the Koran, or any of these books. Before the Bible native people lived on this continent for 30,000 or 50,000 years without a single book, and we had to share the land. I come from a culture near the border of Bolivia, in Brazilian territory today, where we shared everything we had; and it was difficult for a boat to reach us because it had to pass many falls, so we were extremely isolated. The ideas of solidarity, brotherhood, and friendship—these are the values we need to uphold—they existed before the Koran, before the Bible, before the Torah.

Here I am dependent on other people and on money—I do not know how to make anything I am wearing—but in the forests I was self-sufficient. What is money? It is not a real object—not an apple or banana that I can eat. In the cities everything is too artificial, too fictitious. And with money comes evil, comes jealously, comes the things that destroy people—people are destroyed by money, power, and prestige. The god today is money; in everything we try to do, we think about money. It would be better if it were not this way. In order for me to come here from the rain forest, to do anything—it all relates to money, instead of friendship. It is very hard in this environment to relate to people.

Since I came to Canada, I have been uncomfortable whenever I drive a car. I see many people at the bus stop and would like to stop, but if

I do, people will think I am strange and possibly dangerous. When I see poor people on the street, I want to give them money, but this is not acceptable. Yet solidarity should be an important part of every day. Human nature is not stupid. University qualifications are not needed to know the important things in life. It is very simple. We are all the products of thousands and thousands of years of culture. All our knowledge is inside each of us. Just look at the way a little child comes to everybody with love, unconditionally. That is all we need today.

Joel Meyers: Let me start by being unpopular, by disagreeing with several things that have been said. Before I do that, though, I want to take a moment to ask, since "love thy neighbor" has come up so strongly, whether everyone here knows where that statement is found in the Bible? It is from Leviticus, chapter 19, and my suggestion is that you all read Leviticus 19, because "love thy neighbor" is at the end of an entire section that talks about how we should behave, not only toward each other, but toward the natural universe, toward the world. So I only know whether somebody loves their neighbor by observing how they behave toward their neighbor and toward the world. I can only know whether that teaching is real for somebody if in fact I see them behave well.

Before dinner this evening I was having a conversation with one of our panelists, Bertrand Charrier, and he happened to tell me that when he takes walks in Paris, he has a habit of giving a few coins to every beggar he meets on the street. His children see him do this and if he forgets, his children stop him and they say, "Dad, you have to go back; you forgot to give this person some money." That is a wonderful education, an example of loving thy neighbor, which the children have seen and remind their father to do, an act of real kindness.

As to our question, I do not believe that cities are intrinsically good or bad. I think we migrate to cities because cities have the potential to offer freedom, opportunity, social growth, and development. What happens in the city is a function of what happens in us, how we react to life around us and what kind of government we install.

The comments from the audience are very relevant. The question really is how do we respond to very human needs. If we want to create an environment that would ultimately lead to a habitat of solidarity, where people, even though they are different and living in different neighborhoods, have mutual respect and understanding, we must first ask what we are doing to educate the young. What are we doing to help them understand that differences may be wonderful? And in this our example, how we approach and interact with one another, is crucial.

Finally, I am an optimist. I believe that built into all that happens are self-correctives, and that if we care about each other, and if we care about our cities, those correctives come into play. We will not allow certain things, and in fact we try to change them and engage others to help us. We come to a point where we look around and say it is time to act. We involve our neighbors and create a different environment for our neighborhood; we link up with other neighborhoods; we try to change our environment for the better. This happens on local levels and in communities on broader levels. I have great faith in our cities, not a sense that disaster is lurking.

William Vendley: I hesitate to say this as I am aware that there is a priority or hierarchy of needs. Many people are confronted with challenges to their survival, and what I am going to point out is much lower on the hierarchy of needs. However, if we want to have solidarity and a sense of community we have to have public spaces for solidarity and community. Think of any city that you have enjoyed, and ask yourself what is enjoyable about it. It is likely that you had a sense of being connected with the whole. You felt like a participant, a player in the large drama. Today, I think we have to reclaim that sense of being connected to the whole. Achieving this requires far more than money; it will take ingenuity, artistic vision, and brilliance. Clearly basic needs have a priority, but we will not live as a community unless we provide space for that experience of community.

Ismail Serageldin: There is a need for public, not just private space.

Njongonkulu Ndungame: We were put on the spot by Rabbi Meyers about "love thy neighbor" and I will make two comments on this. In my speech this morning I referred to Hans Küng, who says in his latest book that the basis for a global ethic is, first, to treat all human beings humanely, and second, to do to others as you would want them to do to you.

My second comment is a true story I heard from a preacher. This preacher said he was accosted by someone who was not very clean, but was trying to put him on the spot, saying that from Leviticus right up to the time of Jesus the commandment to love thy neighbor was there, but it was not reflected in the state of the world and people's behavior. And then the preacher looked at this man, who was not very tidy, and said, "well, since the beginning of time, there has been water, but look at the state of your neck."

Audience comment: First, we need to stop population growth in the world. Second, the rain forests in the Amazon are burning. This year 300,000 square kilometers are being burned in Brazil. Much of the forest in Indonesia—in Sumatra and Borneo—is also being burned. We need an international tribunal now to judge these countries.

Ismail Serageldin: An international tribunal to judge people who have been involved in burning the forests—another form of adopting a global ethic.

Robert Day: Are urban rivers barriers between communities, or groups of humans, or can the rivers be bridges? Since 1988 we have been working to improve the environmental state of the Anacostia River, and in the process we have found that the American Rivers Association has a great role to play. Traditionally and historically the rivers have been gathering places for people. Most of these urban rivers need much cleaning up, but we have found that the children of Anacostia, who go out and row and use the river, are helping to focus attention on the river, and helping to speed the cleanup. Eleanor Holmes Norton, our congresswoman, has been extremely helpful; she gives medals to these kids for their environmental contributions. The International Federation of Rowing, headquartered in Switzerland, has a major project in Africa to supply equipment from clubs in Europe. People who use the rivers become aware of the cleanup needs, and what those rivers mean to all the things we have been talking about.

Charles Sills: A little earlier in this forum solidarity was described or defined as human dignity. I think that in looking at cities and communities, we have to view human dignity in terms of people being able to make wages and afford products, being able to have a certain standard of living. I would like the panel to give us a couple of case studies of success stories that can be replicated. Success stories of technologies, for today and for the next century, that can bring large numbers of people, in cities and communities, into jobs and make their lives better.

I would like to remind everyone of what Professor Olah was speaking about yesterday, the fuel cell. Our company is involved in developing affordable, mass-produced fuel cells that we believe will revolutionize transportation, create hundreds of thousands of jobs in cities around the world, and solve the problems of air pollution in Mexico City, Bangkok, New York, and other cities.

This is something that we should look at in a replicable way. There has been a kind of undercurrent, not only at this conference but at others, that somehow technology is bad. It can be bad or it can be good. If more small and medium-size companies were engaged in a bootstrap way in communities and cities and were tied into those communities and cities producing products like fuel cells, it would be a major way to get on top of the power curve and on top of the problem curve.

Komanae Obani: Our whole problem is that humanity has not been able to own up to its responsibilities since Adam. Adam's wife gave him an apple. When God asked him what happened, he said that it was not his fault but the fault of his wife. The wife then also claimed it was not her fault but the fault of the serpent. First humanity must own up to its responsibilities by accepting its faults, then we can love our neighbor as ourselves. We can act in solidarity. We can solve the environmental problems.

Alicia Hetzner: I am a member of a lay Buddhist organization, SGI-USA. At a recent training meeting we tried an experiment called diversity dinners. Many of the problems in the United States stem from racial segregation, which is still endemic in cities, where it is reinforced by building by socioeconomic groupings, so that because we often do not even see people of other colors where we live.

The concept of diversity dinners started in Chicago, where a person decided to start inviting people to her home for dinner, focusing specifically on diversity. At our training meeting, as people came off the food line, we created diverse tables of different races from all parts of the United States. It was a bit scary but ultimately very moving to get down to the level of individual dialogue about race. Tonight we have a panel and an audience, but I think this whole discussion needs to come to the level of one-on-one dialogue. People do not really want to talk about diversity because they are afraid. In our Buddhist organization we are attempting to create a safe forum for people to discuss diversity. Everyone has sensitivities, and what has been revealed here is how similar people are. For example, tonight one panelist's sensitivity was that we in the United States do not think of people in Latin America as "Americans." Because we all have our sensitivities, there must be a way for people to have individual dialogues in a safe forum where they feel that they can discuss diversity without someone becoming really upset.

Audience comment: On this question of urban agriculture, which certainly is extremely important in many parts of the world, I would like to add that it is not only in the developing parts of the world that one should give attention to urban agriculture. It is a very important component in the United Nations University's project on the "zero emission research initiative," which works on stimulating gatherings or clusters of industries in the industrialized world that can support each other—for example, the waste heat from one industry is used by another industry, and the waste from one industry is used as a resource by another. By clustering industries we can eliminate waste, and we can also make very considerable gains. I think that industrialized countries should provide examples of what can be done, intelligently, in the interest of improving city environments.

Developing countries are interested in ideas from the industrialized world that have the potential to bring something new. We cannot expect the developing world always to repeat our mistakes. We owe them the best possible knowledge, and we might actually often have to advocate leapfrogging. From that point of view, it was interesting to hear the comment about fuel cells. Solar energy cascading is also an extremely important area of development. If we look at the developments of thin field photovoltaics in the past few years, we will see that our thinking about putting all our energy into power lines may be a false path to take. In areas such as this I think it is the responsibility of the industrialized world to lead, and to show that there are alternatives for countries that are not tied to old flywheels or heavy investments or traditional training.

Ismail Serageldin: There is leapfrogging, and Ashok Khosla mentioned some examples of applied technology. He is doing some wonderful work on small-scale power generation for his villages, which I hope he can tell us about.

Audience comment: It has been mentioned that there is solidarity in cities. There is solidarity, for example, in developing countries among the Mafia, the police, and the politicians. That solidarity is far more powerful than what people in many of these countries have been able to express so far. When thinking about solidarity, one should ask, among whom? On what issues? Against whom?

Veena Das: I will respond to just one issue raised, the notion of whether there is, in fact, greater solidarity among the poor. Sometimes when we hear accounts of the kind of noble transformations of the spirit that we are looking for, the concreteness of faces gets in the way. We must recognize the way in which poverty also degrades, and the difficulties that the very poor have in urban spaces. I am thinking of homeless

men who, if they cannot find a spot under a street light to sleep at night, might be sodomized. I am thinking of children who have to go through every day thinking about how they can escape sexual assault that day—not forever, just that day. I am thinking of mothers who are in conflict with their children over food.

Remembering those faces and those harsh everyday lives, I think it makes little sense to look for nobility of spirit or a love for each other. Yes, we need to consider the nature of the solidarities that the poor need to build. But we must also recognize how fraught these solidarities are because of the difficulties of survival. I would find it very difficult to say to people living in those conditions that they must love each other. What is required is that somehow our cities become capable of saving these people—that they do not have to fight every day for simple survival.

Ismail Serageldin: This is not just in the cities, it is also in the rural areas.

Yolanda Kakabadse: Two small points. One refers to something you said, Ismail, relating to violence among the poorest groups in urban areas. That is the violence we hear about. But there is also violence in groups that are better off in economic terms. It is a different sort of violence, and it is usually muffled in the media, but it is found throughout all groups of society.

Returning to an earlier question: I do not think there is any romanticism in trying to explain what solidarity means among the poor and among others. I am among those others, and I can see that in my own group, and in my country and other countries in my region, we have become detached from one another. As we are increasingly busy, we tend to change our patterns of behavior, including those of solidarity. When you are poor, solidarity means inviting someone home and sharing your food. When you are rich, it means signing a check. There is a real difference in the quality of the experience without romanticizing poverty.

Ashok Khosla: This has been such a rich discussion, I have certainly learned more than I can process just now. But basically there are the issues of poetry versus economics and there is the problem of scale. This morning I made a plea for a more human approach to development. Now I have to do the opposite—I have to choose my words very carefully, with so many reverends and rabbis and archbishops in the room. It is easy to say that people ought to be good, but this is not going to lead to very much unless the other systems are in place. And I am more and more convinced that while we are preaching, and while we are trying to convert, and while we are essentially bringing in the charismatic people to help us achieve those goals, we also have to hedge our bets. We have to get the systems in place and design the cities right, design the villages right.

We have to design ways for people to live well in all settlements, and to be able to share, and to have that solidarity not because they have been told to have it, but because it is the only way they are going to get what they want. Self-interest is rather important; many of our institutions are based on it, and we recognize that in the long run people will have to do what is good for them or what they perceive is good for them. This also leads to fairly mechanistic solutions. While we are getting people to be good, let us get our scales right.

There are economies of scale. A city of 30,000 may not work very well, because it does not have the ability to have all the amenities and services and so on. But a city of 30 million does not work either. Somewhere in between there are good sizes; presumably somewhere between 500,000 and 5 million there is a good-sized city, which can have the economies of scale and not run into the diseconomies.

Setting up systems of governance that will give people a sense of ownership of their community and of their future is much of the answer. Unless people have some control over their lives, are part of the decisionmaking process, and have an ability to impact local decisionmaking, it seems to me that we are not going to get solidarity. This is the case in a few countries but not in many, such as mine. There is no way we can have solidarity with people with whom we cannot share a common future.

Without the rabbis and the archbishops and all the other reverends saying that we ought to be good, it may not work. But that is not enough. We know what things work in different societies,

and perhaps we should start implementing them now.

Wally N'Dow: We are talking about the world of the future and the future of the world. As we think about the world's future and our human journey, the question must be asked: Who owns the world? It is a very important question that we must all struggle to answer.

One view of the world says, "we win, you lose," and "your problems are yours alone, they are not our concern." Let us remember that with globalization—global travel, global communication, global disease pandemics, and global crises—other people's problems have a way of rising up like a wave and hitting our own shores before we know what is happening. So it is very important that we foster a universal ethic of global citizenship and solidarity in order to make the 21st century livable and workable for people in nations large and small.

Azim Nanji: The evidence suggests that the cities of the future will be very difficult places in which to live. People will face many areas of what I call disconnectedness. Many people may, in fact, not live in just one city, or in just one part of a city.

We might want to think about how we can bring some kind of predictability into people's lives in the city. One of the advantages of settlements in the past was that they created a sense of equilibrium because there were elements of predictability. When individuals came to the settlement, they recognized certain things, they were able to predict what would happen to them in certain circumstances. Cities today have become important financial centers, which may explain a lot of the lack of connection people feel—for them the cities are just transit points where their money goes from one place to another. The kind of postmodern "cyber-city" that lies in the future is also going to be an environment of great unpredictability.

Njongonkulu Ndungame: It was stated that urban rivers could become bridges. Where I live, in Cape Town, there is a river that runs through the property called the Lispic River. For some children from disadvantaged backgrounds the experience of that river was the first time they had seen running water. So that is part of our plan for using that property to enrich their lives. We also have an organization called Friends of the Lispic, which is very keen on maintaining and protecting the species in the river. The residents themselves are also involved. We have a garden party for them, and they bring their own refreshments just to be part of that community, to be part of preserving the river. And they have indicated to me that they will give of their labor and expertise to see what can be done on that property to help maintain it forever. So we build small communities in this way, preserving rivers and making them into bridges, and those communities show solidarity.

Joel Meyers: I am not pessimistic, despite some of the data that are being brought forward, because data tend to be only snapshots in time. We all understand that the issues confronting our cities are extremely complex. There are no easy answers. We always deal with a combination of factors that seem to be on a continuum when we talk about how we build human solidarity in our settlements. What is clear is that all of us live in communities, large and small, and that the goal we have of living together in solidarity is a crucial vision, and one that all of us must continue to strive for, despite difficulty and at times despite the fact that we do not see the progress that we want. We come away from a conference like this energized to continue our work, and to continue to work to discover ways that will help bridge differences, help humanize our habitats, and create that solidarity we so much need and seek.

William Vendley: The technical problems we face are daunting. But I am also concerned about what our solidarity will look like. The temptation will be to homogenize ourselves in ways dictated by narrow notions of efficiencies. If that line is followed too ruthlessly, I think we shall be the poorer for it. Alternatively, past experience can provide analogies for our present challenges. That chance is imaged in discussions such as we have had today.