

I

SHD/Ootf.AI-0a)1/5 (I J

REPORT ON THE UNCHS SEIKAR ' SOLVING THE HOUSING PROBLEM IN THE GDR -
ITS RELEVANCE FOR THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES' .

. a.-.

In response to an invitation extended to our Organisation at the 10th Commemorative Session of the UN Commission for Human Settlement (Nairobi, 4 - 16th, April, 1987)3 Comrade Thembisile Majola and myself attended the seminar, held in Dessau, GDR, between the 9th and 24th June, the theme of which was 1 Solving the housing problem in the GDR - it's relevance for the developing countries ' .

This seminar, held under the sponsorship of the UN Centre for Human Settlement (Habitat), was hosted by the Building Academy of the GDR. Participants to the same were drawn from 15 African and Middle East countries and included representations of 3 liberation movements (SWAPO, PAC, ANC).

The programme, of a two-week duration, consisted of an intensive course of lectures, workshops, study-tours and cultural activities and was developed in two parts:

I _ Information and discussion on the GDR's experience in the solution of problems of human settlement and homelessness, With emphasis on the development policies adopted and the mechanisms for their implementation at national, regional and local levels. This included information on the GDR's work in developing countries - such as Vietnam, Yemen and Ethiopia. The following lectures were presented:

- The experience gained in the GDR in solving the housing problem.
- _ Ways to solve the housing problem in an African developing country.
- The training of skilled construction workers in the GDR.
- Planned development of settlements in connection with social and economic programmes. I

- Industry - the basis for the development of small and medium-sized towns.
- Industrialization of the rural areas - a concept for the infrastructural development and the satisfaction of basic needs in developing countries.
- Solution of the housing problem - way of living and reproduction of the housing stock.

- Planning instruments for designing and organising residential areas.
- Solution of rural areas development problems by cooperation between planners, local governments and communities.
- Conditions of working and living in a village.

II - This section concentrated more on the technical aspects of building methods and construction systems applied in the GDR, and included the following lectures:

- Simple self-help construction systems;
- Wall-Panel-Column (WPC) construction.
- Light Panel Construction (LPC 2ton).
- Clay building technology for the erection of simple houses by self-help activities of the population.
- Selection, quality assessment and upgrading of building materials.

"1/ /o%/g

a
t
e
g
E
m
S
E
g
g

- Prerequisites to prolong the life of buildings by using suitable materials and structures as well as necessary measures of maintenance and reconditioning.
- The Bauakademie der DDR - research centre of the construction industry in the GDR. Its activities abroad.
- Information on the International Congress of Architecture and Town Planning, Malmö, Sweden, 14th-16th July.

The above programme of lectures and discussions was interspersed at various points with the presentation of national reports prepared by the participants, including that of ourselves which was presented on the 16th June (See news clipping attached). All the topics, prepared and presented by eminent personalities of the Bauakademie, were well documented and interesting, and resulted in lively and highly motivated debate. The opinion of the delegates, as expressed in the draft evaluation document at the close of the seminar, coincided in that all the themes were of particular relevance to the developing countries. However, we feel that a lecture on the New Economic Order, as proposed by the Socialist Countries, would also have been a valuable addition, as one of the fundamental issues around which discussion revolved was alternative sources and methods of loan finance for the building industries of these countries.

Some of the key issues which remained central to the debate, and which we wish to highlight are the following;

- For any significant advances to be made towards the solution of the problems of shelter and settlement there has to exist a unity of social and economic policy at national level, with the greater part of construction being conducted by the state, with the support and promotion of the efforts of the local population in the form of affordable credits, manpower, materials and equipment. During the seminar this point resulted in very lively discussion as, in the opinion of some of the participants, the role of the state radiates in the facilitation rather than in the implementation of housing policies.

- The experience of the GDR is that rural-urban migration trends can be controlled by the planned and reciprocally harmonized development of big cities, small/intermediate towns and villages in the national settlement structure. The basis for the stabilization, and even reversal, of present migratory flows is a long-range conception for the regional distribution of productive forces, and the provision of work-places in the rural areas, not only for the local population, but also for a migrant reserve from the cities. The creation of harmonious relations between the development of industry and towns is a basic requirement of social development, based on objective social phenomena and processes.

Other aspects which we felt were of particular importance and relevance to our situation;

are laid out in our draft evaluation document, a copy of which is attached to this report. i

All in all, we feel that this seminar was a necessary and valuable experience for the future work of our movement and of singular importance to ourselves, engaged as we

are on a daily basis in the construction activities of the Organisation to better the living conditions in exile of our cadres. We wish to express our sincere gratitude for this opportunity afforded to us.

Report prepared by Zama C. Mvusi,
27th July, 1987. Dakawa, Tanzania.

c.c. Treasurer-General's Office.

c.c. Acting Project-Manager.

c.c. Chief-Administrator's Office.