

## Draft Minutes

### 1<sup>st</sup> SSC Meeting Urbanization and Global Environmental Change Bonn, 8 – 9 October 2005

**Venue:**

Universitätsclub Bonn  
Konviktstr.9  
53113 Bonn  
Germany

**Participants:**

Cheikh Guéye, Frauke Kraas, Gregor Laumann, Ooi Giok Ling, Susan Parnell, Roberto Sánchez-Rodríguez, Karen Seto, David Simon, William Solecki

**Invited Guests (Sunday 14:00 – 15:00):**

Richard Aspinall (GLP Interim Co-Chair), Dennis Ojima (GLP Interim Co-Chair), Patricia Romero-Lankao (GCP SSC)

**Apologies:**

Xiaopei Yan

## Saturday, 8<sup>th</sup> of October

**INTRODUCTION (14:00 – 16:00)**

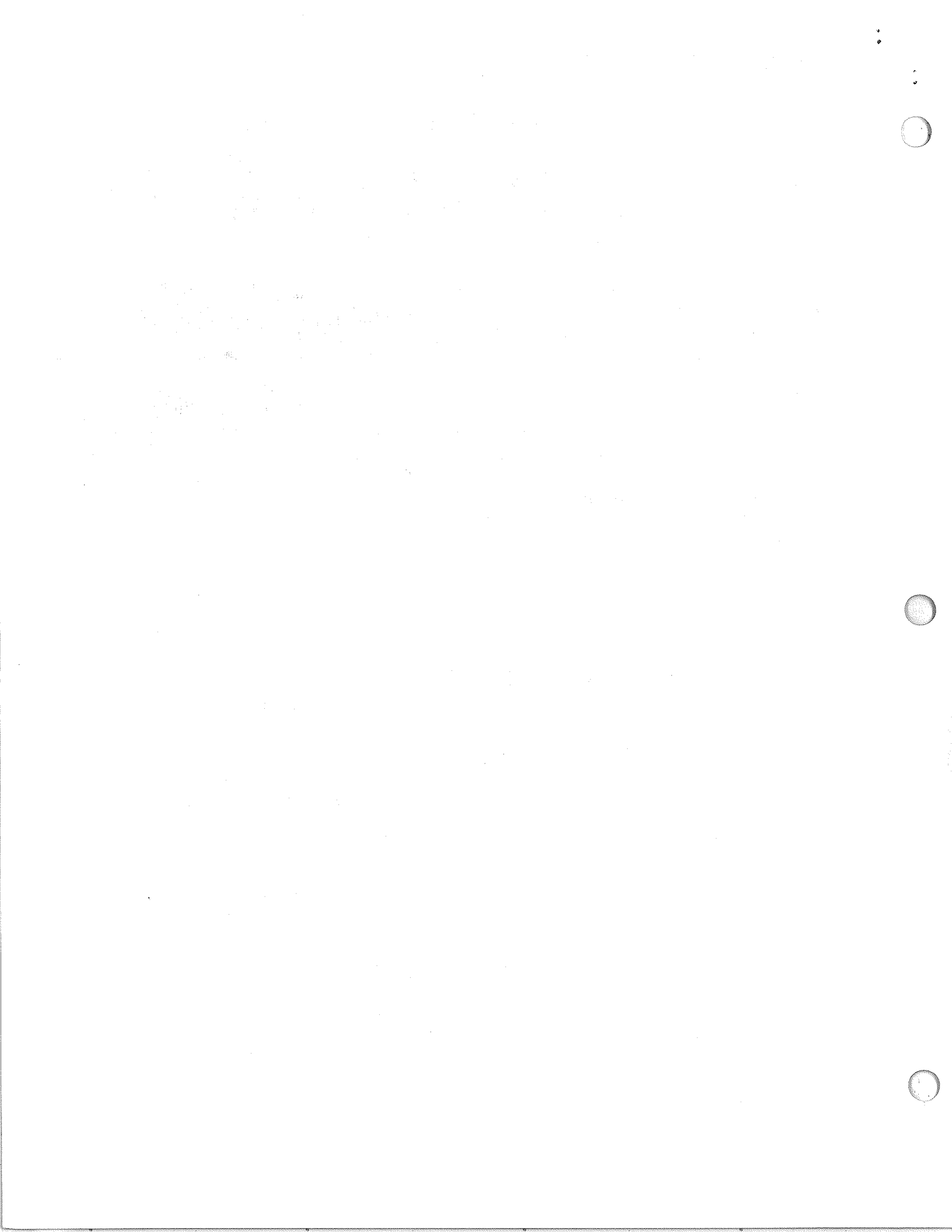
Chair: Karen Seto / Roberto Sánchez

The meeting was opened with an introduction of each of the members as well as the IHDP and its scientific foci as a larger context of the new core project, followed by an initial discussion of the UGEC Science Plan and its objectives.

It was concluded that it would be important to be aware of the various constituencies dealing with and trying to define the notion of “urbanization” as well as its contested and political character.

**DISCUSSION / CONCLUSION(S) / DECISION(S):**

The SSC will immediately start working on a position paper to define “urbanization” in the context of the core project. This definition would encompass all the parameters of the debate about the term, including its technical parts and also and in particular discuss the fact that it is a politically laden term, which is highly contested (for instance in large parts of Africa or China) and serves different agendas. This paper should be held in a language



accessible to both practitioners and academics. A first draft will be prepared until the next SSC meeting to be discussed and finalized.

***ACTION ITEM(S):***

- Start Drafting the position paper.

***IPO LOCATION (16:00-18:00 - readdressed on Sunday 12:00 - 12:45)***

Chair: Bill Solecki

There was an intensive discussion on the location of the International Project Office. Roberto gave an overview about the situation of the other projects and their offices. The history of the discussions so far was briefly resumed and its documentation reconsidered. The expressions of interests by the University of Cologne and the Arizona State University were tabled and scrutinized particularly with respect to the 'intangibles'.

***DISCUSSION / CONCLUSION(S) / DECISION(S):***

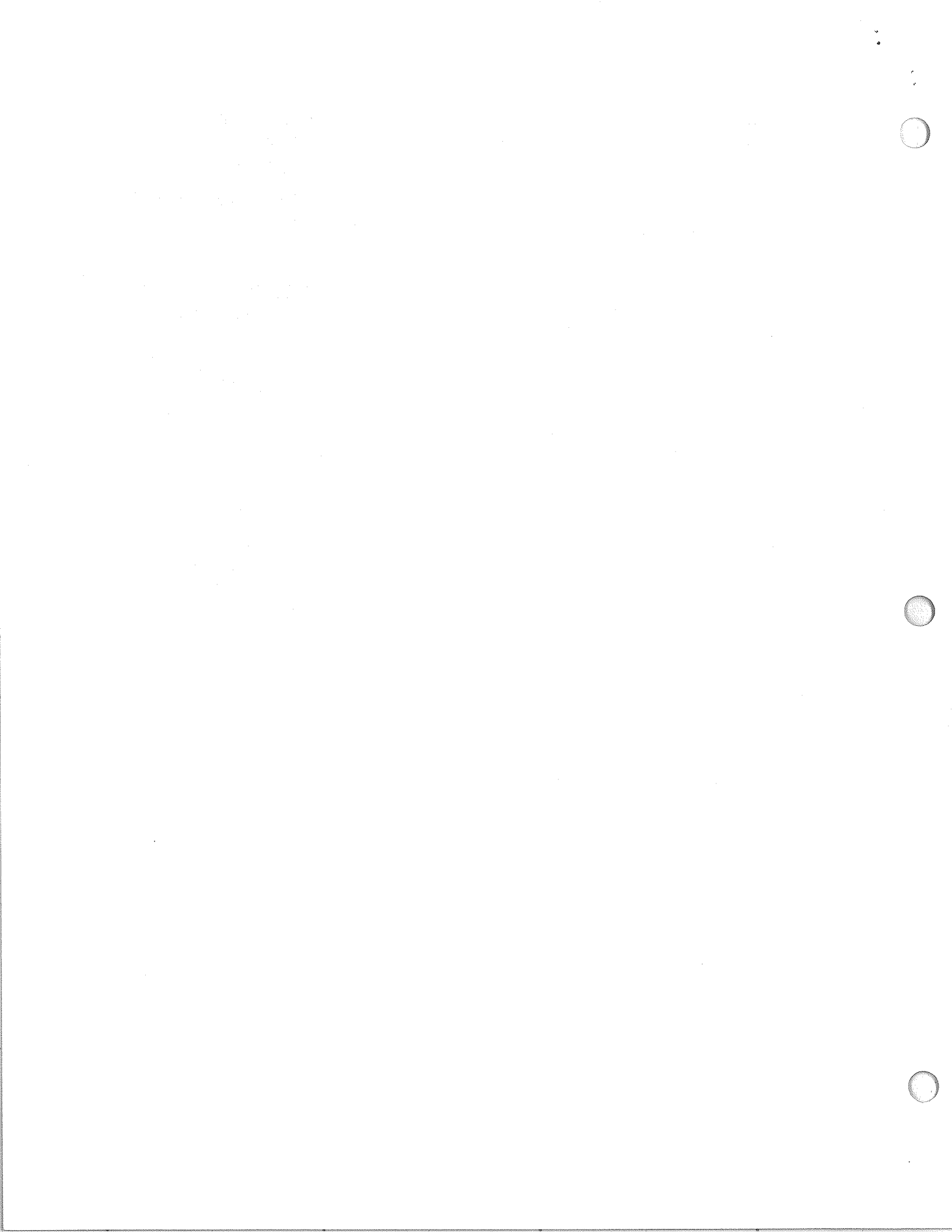
Both offers were considered about equal in its scope of support including the funding level and the level of certainty of that funding. Both locations would offer an excellent scientific basis and institutional platform.

Specific arguments pro ASU were its strong academic foundation and dynamics. There is a good working relationship between Karen Seto and ASU already and also some working experience between Roberto Sanchez and some of the proponents of the IPO at ASU. The strongest argument in favour of ASU was its proximity to the location of the co-chairs and the expected operational benefits from this fact.

Arguments against ASU were seen in the potential bias in the reputation and perception of an IPO in some parts of the world due to a US location. There were also concerns that there was a risk of being carried away by the internal dynamics of the University and its strong agendas.

Specific arguments pro Cologne were also the long standing academic tradition and its strong institutional networks particularly in the field of international organizations (like European and United Nations constituencies etc.). Also the strong backing from the German government side was accentuated.

The basic argument against Cologne raised during the meeting was the logistical difficulty to interact with such an office for the co-chairs and the expected higher transaction cost of an IPO such distant from where the co-chairs are located. Both expected to be able to maintain stronger every-day working relations with ASU and by this would have a much stronger position in terms of supervising the work of the office and backing its position within the University system.



The arguments of all members of the committee were heard. It was concluded, however, that the committee failed to discuss appropriate way of decision taking on conflicting positions (voting, consensus building, executive decision). Finally, the co-chairs were asked by the members of the committee to take a final decision and inform the other members on the next day, considering the arguments and providing a rationale for their decision. The decision would be presented to the SC on Sunday, October 09, 2005.

The question of location of the IPO was readdressed the next day in order to find a strategy to secure continuous support of both the German and the US funding partnerships. This included a discussion of the possible roles of both Cologne and ASU as part of the research and coordination infrastructure of the project.

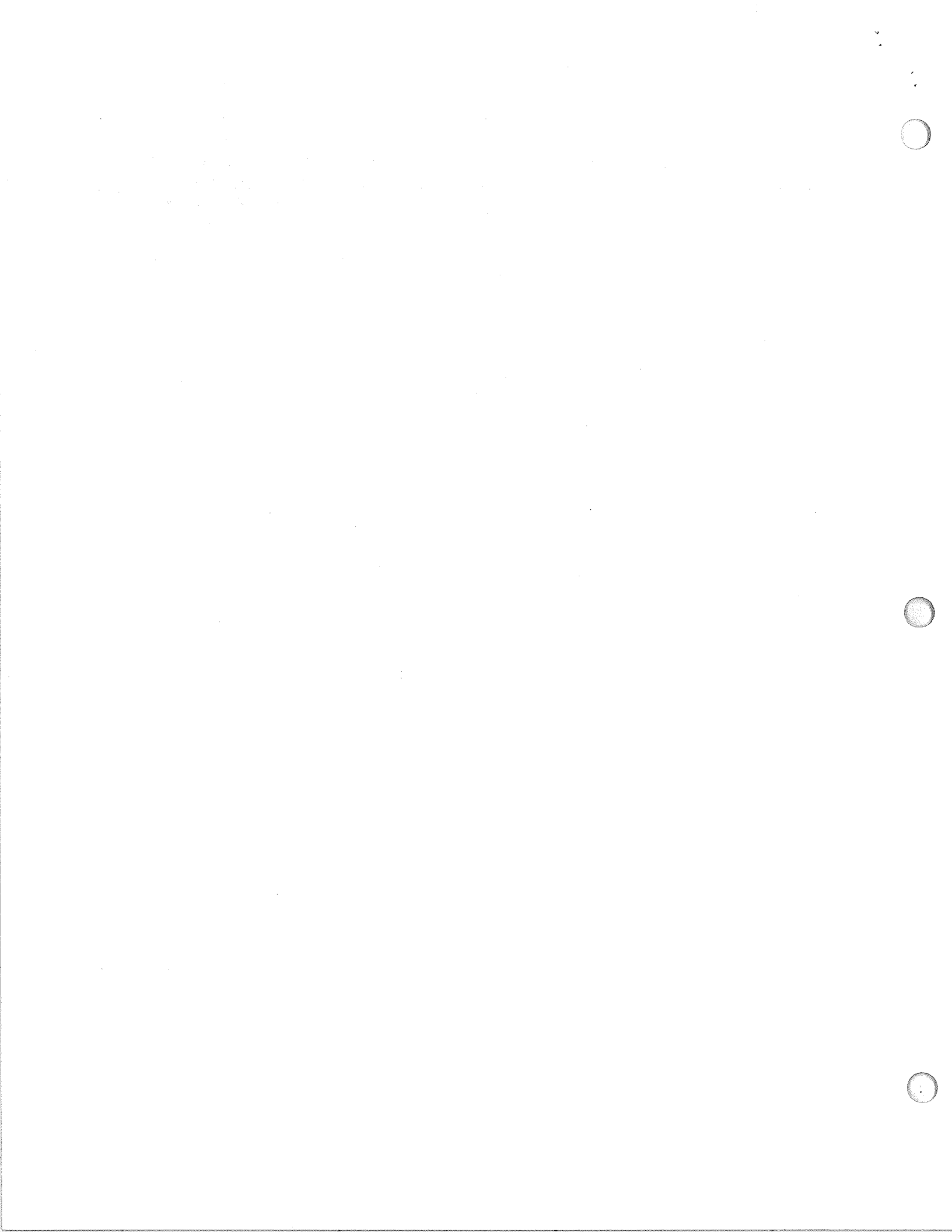
The decision was taken to accept the proposal of Arizona State University and nominate it as the location of the International Project Office. This would be reported back to the IHDP Scientific Committee in a letter, providing a rationale for this decision.

At the same time it was considered important to communicate to the German funding consortium (consisting of the University of Cologne and the German Ministry for Research, BMBF) that the decision to locate the IPO at Arizona State University rather than at the University of Cologne was taken primarily on practical operational considerations. The German side was considered a very important partner and the SSC decided to request that BMBF consider supporting a core-funding package that will enable a solid foundation for the implementation activities of the core project. This would allow for a continued strong role of the BMBF in the development of the of the core project and the urbanization agenda.

***ACTION ITEM(S):***

- *Karen* to draft two letters to Coleen Vogel, Chair of the IHDP SC
  - a) to communicate the decision of the SSC regarding the IPO
  - b) to explain the position of the SSC on the German offer.

Both letters will be circulated among the members of the SSC first to coordinate their input.



## Sunday, 9<sup>th</sup> of October

### IMPLEMENTATION (9:00 – 12:00)

Chair: David Simon

The implementation mechanisms and principles of the Science Plan were discussed. David Simon presented the implementation strategy as a blend of activities will vary over time, in three phases of strategic objectives (short-term (3 years); medium-term (6 yr); long-term (10 yr)). He pointed out that the committee needed to be aware of the double nature of the implementation strategy: on the one hand targeted towards academia and on the other hand targeted to finding ways of interacting with practitioners. The challenge will be to pursue both in its own right but find ways to let both implementation domains be mutually beneficial. It was agreed that the plan should serve as a platform of political dialogue with actors on many different scales. The initial priorities were discussed more in detail.

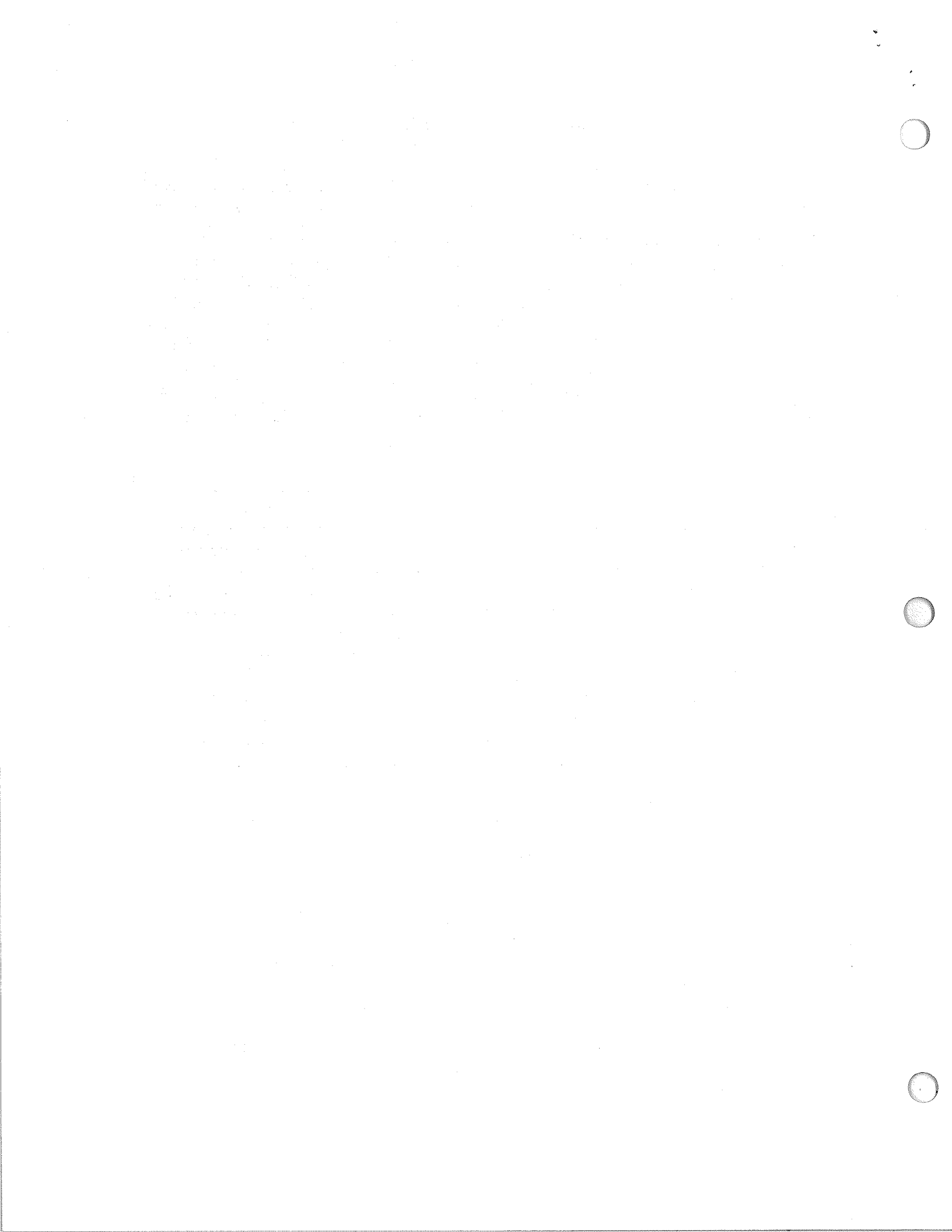
### DISCUSSION / CONCLUSION(S) / DECISION(S):

The committee was in agreement about the need to find start with identifying various places and venues to synthesize and publish existing knowledge. In an initial phase the SSC would need to start thinking about book proposals, special issues of journals, workshops etc. to provide syntheses of existing body of existing but diffuse knowledge within academia and kick off certain debates. At the same time, the project should be present at e.g. the ICLEI conference (February 2006 in Cape Town) and other venues like the UN Habitat World Urban Forum in Vancouver June 2006) to meet practitioners and explore appropriate ways to discuss with them the existing body of knowledge and engage them in the relevant debates and the framing of the research questions. This process includes making the syntheses and debates within academia accessible to practitioners by respective publications and products. Subsequently, the project would need to identify and start filling the gaps by reflecting on the debates in both arenas.

### ACTION ITEM(S):

*Concrete proposal to proceed were made by individual members of the committee:*

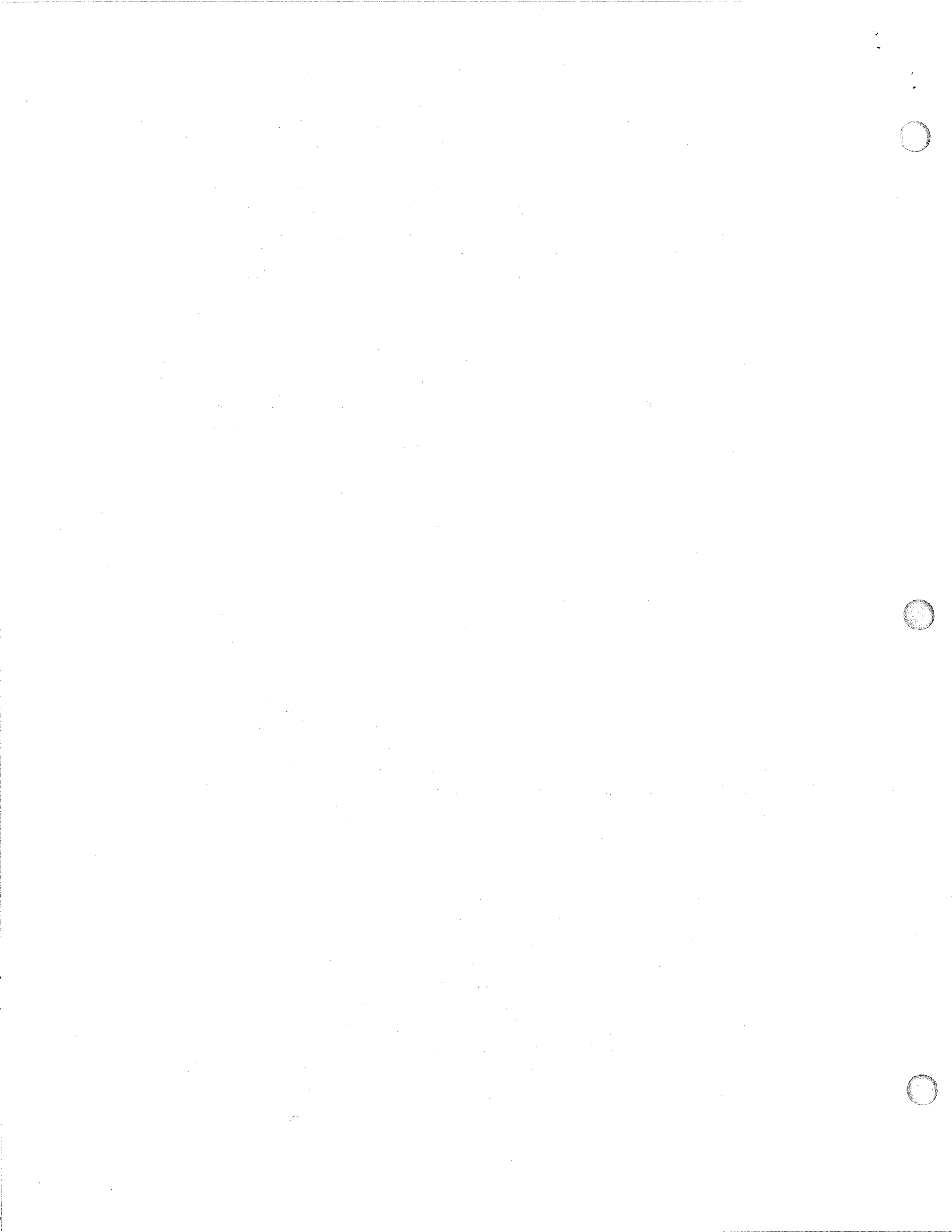
- ❑ *Cheikh*: Is currently considering to develop a discussion platform on “Urbanization, Global Environmental Change and Globalization” moderated by ENDA and conducted on different levels (municipal, regional and national level). The objective is to reach a certain conceptual consensus and start implementing such concepts coherently across levels. A precondition would be to distribute the Science Plan widely and make it the basis of the discussion.
- ❑ *Cheikh* also suggested to propose the topic of “Global Environmental Change” as next thematic focus to a working group of regional representatives from South America, Africa and South Asia, which he was going to meet after the SSC





meeting in Geneva to present and discuss the results from a previous set of studies. They have been working together for some years coordinated by ENDA.

- Another major agenda item of *Cheikh's* group at ENDA will be the participation at the World Open Forum in Vancouver June 2006 – ENDA is organizing with UN Habitat and ANOUMIE (?) an e-Discussion with 60 experts to prepare this meeting. They are organizing this debate for Africa and this should result in a publication by March 2006 to be launched at the Vancouver conference and trigger an international debate on it. He considers this as an extremely interesting opportunity to have a side event there and present out science agenda. 6000 majors and city authority representatives are expected to attend and this is where people get their ideas and are exposed to new thinking and agendas. As it is now the time to try and be included in the programme, Cheikh will try to take the lead to get some input into this forum. He will introduce the Science Plan in the e-debate and also He will also provide Karen with two addresses to get in touch with to request officially to be part of the further process.
- *Sue*: the next ICLEI meeting will be in Cape Town in February 2006. She suggests organizing a half day academic meeting back to back with this conference, as it would be the perfect opportunity for an active participation and engagement with a wide practitioners audience using the ICLEI infrastructure. The basis question for the ICLEI audience would be: 'What is happening in science that should be making an impact on local authorities?'. She also suggested making use of this event as a starting point for a regional African Network with good proportion of African experts invited, partly to report on their relevant research.
- *Gregor*: suggested to use the Cape Town Meeting as an opportunity for the next SSC meeting to maintain momentum and use it also for writing research proposals, targeting donors etc (one of the funding opportunities to be considered could be a Danish initiative with 800k research money on urban environment). It would be important to structure that meeting around what we think should be our key messages beyond the first level of messages we sent out within the Science Plan. Embedded could be a scientific synthesis meeting of the SSC, trying to bring together a number of experts and come up with a number of messages.
- *David*: proposed to submit a panel with elements of presentation and discussion to the Annual Meeting of the Royal Geographical Society (1st September 2006).
- It was concluded that the translation of the Science Plan into French, Spanish and Mandarin would be highly desirable and a precondition for the development of regional networks. *Sue* and *Cheikh* offered to help with the French translation and suggested approaching the international Francophone Agency for assistance and possibly funding. *Roberto* offered to help finding a way to translate it into Spanish. *Gregor* mentioned that the IHDP Chinese National Committee indicated their interest to translate it into Mandarin and will clarify the nature of that



commitment. It would be important for all to get a quote from whoever could practically translate it, so that we could start finding the money to do so!

*Other action items with no personal responsibility assigned:*

- ❑ The SSC decided to try and start setting the stage soon by getting out a special issue of a journal (for example “Urban Affairs Review” or “Global Environmental Change”) featuring the work of SSC members and other scholars not involved in the committee so far under the label of the core project.
- ❑ The SSC also intends to aim for a quick publication of an information leaflet (in IHDP format and layout) and a special issue of the IHDP Update Newsletter.
- ❑ The Science Plan should be converted into a paper, which is easier accessible to a wider audience of practitioners. It should also serve as a mission statement answering the basic questions: What is it we want to tell them and why should they listen to us? It should give arguments why science and practice should listen to each other and point out how both would benefit from listening!
- ❑ A list of potential publication venues for a publication strategy should be one of the agenda items of next SSC meeting (including relevant regional journals etc.).
- ❑ The Executive Officer will play a key role in facilitating the two-track implementation strategy. A deliberate job description will be essential to attract someone with the appropriate personal qualifications to the position. A first draft was drawn up at the meeting to establish the selection criteria of the SSC (notes taken by David Simon).

***IPO LOCATION readdressed 12:00 - 12:45 – minutes see above!***

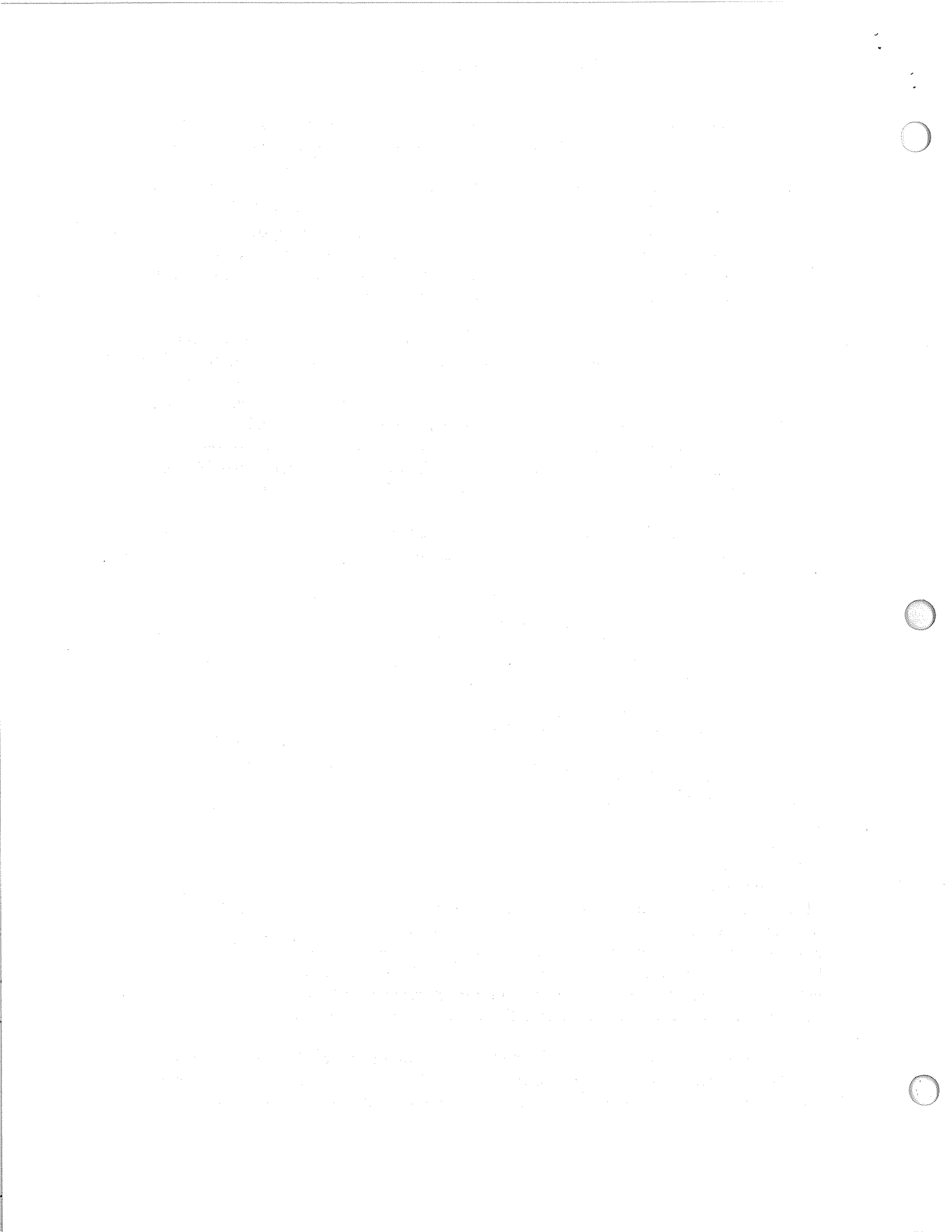
**CONCRETE OFFERS FOR CO-OPERATION (14:00 – 15:00)**

Chair: Frauke Kraas

***Global Carbon Project***

*Patricia Romero Lankao* introduced the Global Carbon Project (GCP) and its initiative on local and regional carbon-budgets. She introduced the idea of a conference on Carbon Management at Urban and Regional Levels in Mexico City, 4-8 September 2006 in Mexico. The GCP seeks endorsement or co-sponsorship of UGEC for this conference. Furthermore, the GCP is working to set up regional networks on carbon management and Urban and Regional Development and would be interested in a cooperation. Two networks currently operate in South and South-East Asia and in South America. Another desirable initiative would be the cooperation on a working definition for “city”.

The SSC welcomed the initiative of the GCP. The committee asked, however, to consider that the GCP is already fully operational, what the UGEC yet has to become. There is an obvious overlap between the areas of concern of both projects, but at the moment the



UGEC needs to be modest about commitments. Obvious initial fields of cooperation could be mutual information and links on websites, mutual information about collaboration with local authorities to avoid standing on each other's toes as well as joint efforts in regional network building. The conference in Mexico City was welcomed as an excellent venue to start some of these efforts, serving particularly some of the matters of conceptual convergence.

### ***Global Land Project***

*Dennis Ojima and Richard Aspinall* introduced the Global Land Project and how urban areas will be addressed within this project. Particular thematic overlaps will be in the conceptualization of urban consumption and global markets (including the notion of teleconnections), C-management and regional C-bugets (together with the GCP), land use changes and land change dynamics in peri-urban areas and the impacts of urbanization on the delivery of ecosystems goods and services.

Other issues of joint interest have been identified during the subsequent discussion in the areas of land use classification schemes, issues of land institutions, some conceptual problems like a working definition of 'the urban' vs. 'the rural' or ways to look at land tenure or land regulation.

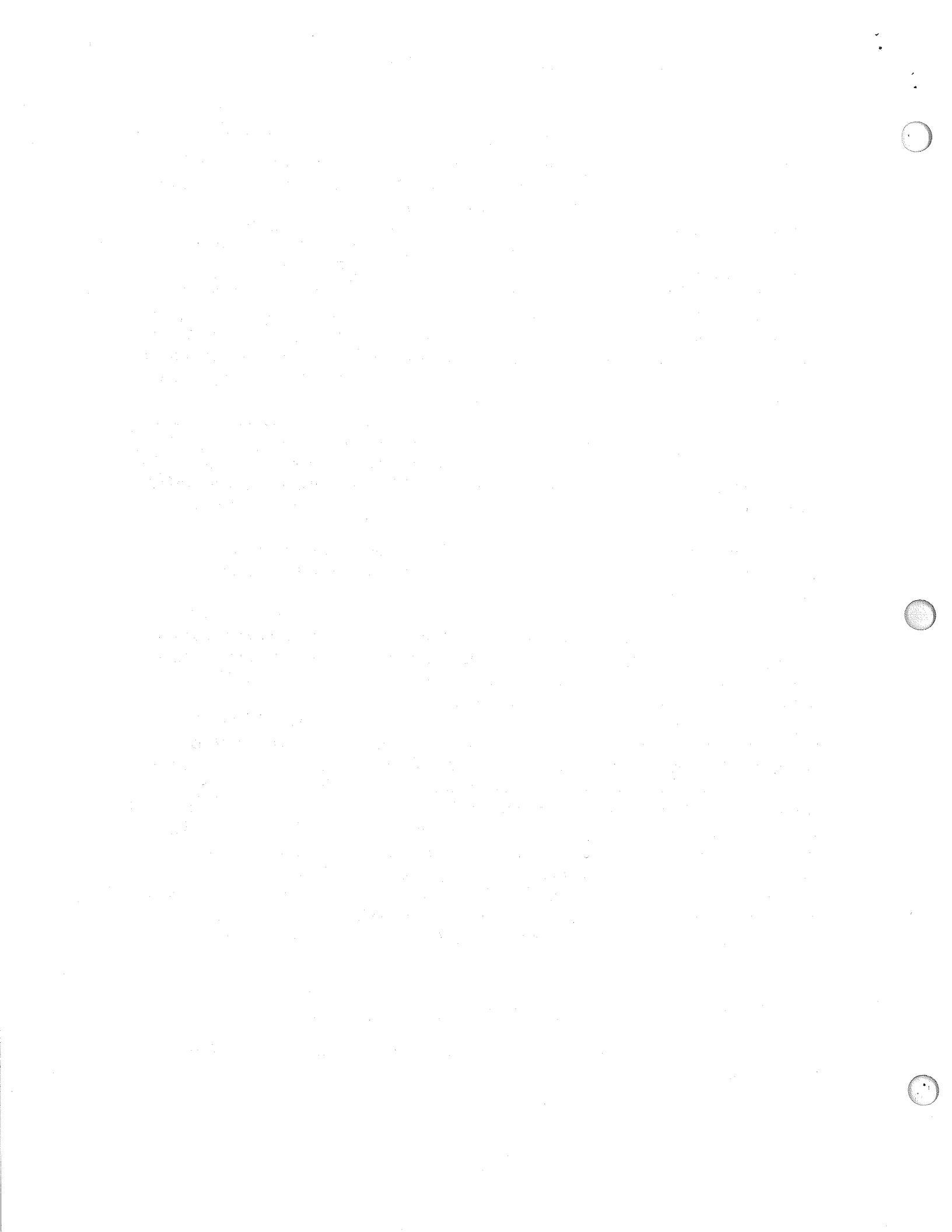
Given the clear thematic overlaps, the discussion focused on some of the more operational issues rather than thematic foci. These considerations included cooperation with the GCP, presented earlier that day.

Concrete steps of cooperation would be to identify in all three committees liaison persons to represent the respective science project at the meetings of the others. Rotating schemes within in the SSC would help building a pool of scholars, which could also help establishing an exchange between the committees.

It was concluded that on all accounts any endorsement policy should as one critical aspect include the responsibility of project are data sharing and result synthesis. Some of the intricacies of endorsement policies were discussed; particularly on the problem that projects are usually only endorsed after the funding was secured as pre-endorsement is always problematic, not having the expertise of a review body. However, the potential benefit of an endorsement in seeking funding may be one of the aspects making it more likely for research projects to seek proximity to the UGEC. David also mentioned the necessity for capacity building on successful in proposal writing in countries with a weak research infrastructure. Dennis anticipates that there will be letters of interest issued by the GLP for research proposals, which fit into the GLP realm, without preemption of an endorsement later on.

<b><i>DISCUSSION / CONCLUSION(S) / DECISION(S):</i></b>
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The UGEC SSC agreed to endorse the GCP conference in September 2006 (*decision taken by email after the SSC meeting*).



**ACTION ITEM(S):**

- *Karen* will draft a letter to GCP and GLP to acknowledge this meeting and its outcome to have a paper trail.

**Outreach and Communication ?**

I have no minutes on this part. I was out of the room for parts of the meeting and neither do I have minutes on this agenda item nor do I recall whether it has been addressed at all.

**CONCLUSIONS (15:00-16:00)**

Chair: Karen Seto

The last hour was used for wrapping up and tying up the loose ends.

**DISCUSSION / CONCLUSION(S) / DECISION(S):**

The project should be presented as one of a new generation of IHDP core projects with a more active and bi-directional approach to engage with potential users of the scientific knowledge base.

The endorsement strategy needs to be addressed and finalized by email.

IPO location: the SSC needs to define what is best for the project from a scientific point of view. There will be a letter by the UGEC SSC to the SC (Coleen Vogel) suggesting a strategy how to deal with the different expressions of interest and this will be negotiated by the SC with the funding agencies.

Regular teleconferences should be continued on roughly a monthly basis. The next one will be about two weeks from the SSC meeting. The possibly try "netmidi" or other devices like "skype" to communicate was discussed.

**ACTION ITEM(S):**

- *Gregor* will take the endorsement strategy of *Karen's* and the minutes from the relevant teleconferences and try prepare and circulate a proposal for an endorsement procedure soon.

*The meeting ended at 16:00*





## UGEC SSC

Pre-ICLEI Congress workshop, UCT GSB, 24-5 February 2006

### Issues arising for us to consider and embed in our grant applications and work

1. Lack of clarity, even among multidisciplinary, social science researchers, about the meaning and nature of GEC. Therefore basic definitions and exemplification needed.
2. Need to spell out clearly the relevance of GEC to the local scale and to local authorities (LAs). This is best done using concrete local examples, as with sustainable development (SD), and explaining the cost savings and other benefits that can accrue. Wide perception that GEC is more properly a national and international issue. Also a perception that LAs bear the burden of coping/mitigating but are not relevant to causation of GEC.
3. Issues of scale and time: multi-scalar feedbacks, and different timescales of relevance.
4. Need to spell out clearly:
  - that 'the environment', SD and GEC are not different, conflicting or conflicting agendas/priorities but that SD needs to take account of GEC issues
  - how GEC differs from 'natural' disasters and hence how planning, mitigation and coping interventions need to differ
  - the relevance of GEC impacts and planning issues in terms of
    - poverty reduction, environmental/social justice agendas, which are dominant discourses and political priorities in many poorer countries
    - short term interventions on poverty, environment etc being (potentially or actually) undermined by longer term GEC.
5. LAs need locally-oriented and policy-relevant research in real time, and
  - at affordable prices (if LAs fund the research)
  - consistent with current plans or explaining the need for inclusion in such plans and budgets
  - with local champion(s) within the structure.
6. Useful to look the other way at how what local authorities do impacts on GEC.

DS 25/2/06

