

25th October 2017 - “There is no logic that can be superimposed on the city; people make it, and it is to them, not buildings, that we must fit our plans.” This quote by Jane Jacobs, the urban activist and author, rings as true today as it did when she pronounced it in 1958. Cities all around the world are having their essence leeches from them by towering structures, modern monuments to progress that add only to a domineering skyline, sterilizing and whitewashing vibrant, colourful and historic areas. Jane Jacobs opposed this ill-considered approach to redevelopment, advocating instead for a community-centred policy.

To mark [Urban October](#) and the [World Urban Forum 9](#), Ciné-ONU, in partnership with [UN-Habitat](#),

screened ‘

[Citizen Jane: Battle for the City](#)

’, a documentary about Jane Jacobs’ battle to save historic New York City from the ravages of Robert Moses’ ruthless redevelopment era from 1940s-1960s.



The screening was followed by a panel discussion chaired by Deborah Seward (UNRIC), with

three guest speakers: Tobias Kettner (UN-Habitat Brussels); Eric Corijn (Emeritus Professor – Vrije Universiteit Brussel), and Peter Defranceschi (Head of Office for ICLEI Europe).

Addressing the audience after the screening, Tobias Kettner spoke about the continued importance of Jane Jacobs' contribution to urban studies. He cited a statistic that, "soon two thirds of the world's population will live in cities," highlighting the imperative for an ongoing debate about the direction of urbanization.



Peter Defranceschi also paid homage to Jacobs' advocacy for a stronger community-focused approach to development. He made the point that, "sustainable cities now have a development plan that includes citizens." Seemingly the lessons received from Jacobs had been learnt.

Subsequently, the discussion covered the impacts of urbanism outside the lives of the inhabitants of cities. Here, Eric Corijn raised the futility of considering the city along the same lines as a nation state; unified and territorially limited. Speaking on European cities he said, "the problem with European integration is that it is limited to membership of twenty eight nation states, not wider metropolitan areas."



The handout from our event is available [here](#)

For more information on 'Citizen Jane: Battle for the City' click [here](#)

Learn more about [Urban October](#)

Learn more about the [World Urban Forum 9](#)

Why not have a look at the photos from the event on our [Flickr](#) ?

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