

EAROPH-Australia eBulletin – 11/2014 Issue

24th EAROPH World Congress and Mayors' Caucus Jakarta 10th-14th August 2014 (Part-1 Report)

Theme: Towards Resilient and Smart Cities – *Innovation, Planning and Determination in Managing Major Cities of the World*

It was a great EAROPH World Congress and Mayors' Caucus mounted by EAROPH-Indonesia under the leadership of Ir Bernardus Djonoputro.

On **Day-1** of the Congress, EAROPH International held the 24th Council Meeting, followed by the 45th EAROPH Executive Committee Meeting. EAROPH's incumbent President, Dr Kyung-Hwan Kim of Korea, chaired both meetings. At the election of new office bearers, Deputy Minister of Public Works, Indonesia, HE Dr Hermanto Dardak was elected President of EAROPH for 2014-2016. As the EAROPH Secretariat International will be sending out Minutes of both meetings, details are not reported here. Following these meetings, the Minister of Public Works, Indonesia, HE Djoko Kirmanto, hosted the EAROPH President's Dinner. EAROPH members and Mayors attending the Mayors' Caucus were invited to attend.



Immediate Past President of EAROPH Dr K. H. Kim passed on the medal of office to the newly elected President for 2014-2016 Deputy Minister of Public Works, Indonesia, HE Dr Hermanto Dardak. Dr Kim was *ipso facto* elected Honorary President of EAROPH.



Newly installed EAROPH President for 2014-2016 Deputy Minister of Public Works, Indonesia, HE Dr Hermanto Dardak delivering his acceptance speech.

On **Day-2** some 500 participants including about 250 from overseas attended the Congress.

Four officials of EAROPH Secretariat were present: Norliza Hashim (Secretary General of EAROPH), Khairiah Talha (EAROPH Honorary President), John Koh (EAROPH Honorary President) and Vincent Patrick (Executive Secretary of EAROPH). Norliza was an invited speaker.

Four members of EAROPH-Australia (E-A) attended: Kerry McGovern (President of E-A), Dennis Ingemann (Public Officer of E-A), KC Leong (Membership Director of E-A and Honorary President of EAROPH), and Coralie Leong (Council Member of EAROPH). Dr Anthony Kent of Victoria University, Melbourne also attended; in October 2014, he was admitted to the membership of EAROPH via EAROPH-Australia. Both Kerry and KC were invited speakers.

Other EAROPH National Chapters were also represented: EAROPH-Japan, EAROPH-Korea, EAROPH-Philippines, EAROPH-Malaysia, and EAROPH-Indonesia.

On behalf of Governor of DKI Jakarta, the Deputy Governor H.E. Ir. Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, MM and also the Minister of Public Works, Indonesia, HE Djoko Kirmanto officiated at the opening ceremony, and declared the Congress open.

Plenary Session 1 – Governance and Innovation in Our Cities

Presentation 1 – HE Ibon Areso, Mayor of Bilbao



Mayor Ibon Areso is the presenter in black suit.

From left: 2nd presenter, Clare Shine from Salzburg Global Seminar, English language translator for Mayor Ibon Areso, 1st presenter Bilbao Mayor Ibon Areso, and Session Chairperson Norliza Hashim, Secretary General of EAROPH.

Since the City of Bilbao has won some 30 international awards as an extraordinary modern city through its efforts of urban regeneration over a period of nearly 3 decades, it was therefore highly exciting to welcome its current Mayor, Ibon Areso, to give a presentation at the opening of this EAROPH World Congress under the theme: Towards Resilient and Smart Cities. Iban Areso was the Councillor of Urbanism in Bilbao before he became the Mayor on March 21, 2014, after the death of the previous Mayor Iñaki Azkuna. Even though his presentation was in Spanish and had to be translated into English by his interpreter, the packed conference hall was all attention waiting for the translation and the coloured slides accompanying his presentation.

Mayor Areso briefly traced the history of Bilbao and outlined how it had gone into social and economic decline as a heavy industrial city. In spite of the fact that it was second only to Barcelona in importance in heavy manufacturing, all the iron, steel, shipbuilding, heavy machinery in the 1980s merely added to the sense of urban decay, with pollution in its urban scapes, rivers, ports, land transport systems and urban housing. Unemployment was rising and people were moving out of this depressing region, even though Bilbao is the capital of the province of Biscay, in the autonomous Basque Country.

As an architect and an urban planner, Ibon Areso was appointed as the Director for Urban Planning for the City's new and more effective planning. He began to realise that the whole metropolitan area of Bilbao needed to be transformed into a service economy. This was a complex systems approach to urban transformation. That was before he entered into politics. To achieve this transformation, the city needed strong strategies to effectively involve social, cultural, physical, economic and political regeneration. When he entered the Local Council of Bilbao in the 1980s, he became the Chief Planner for the new city planning. Soon he became the First Deputy Mayor and the political head of planning for the modernisation of this city. His vision was embodied in the development concept. In 1989, the City adopted the Master Plan.

His strategic convictions concerning Bilbao's regeneration were embedded in the now well-known four strategies:

Strategy-1 Provide accessibility to Bilbao from Outside while Increasing Mobility within the Metropolis: Firstly, the city needed to be physically attractive to draw in residents, visitors and investors. It should be made more accessible to people from the outside and around the world, which meant that they needed better road and rail systems, better ports and airports. While upgrading infrastructure, Ibon Areso also adopted new digital communication systems and the use of fibre optics.

Strategy-2 Environmental and Urban Transformations: Secondly the Metropolis needed holistic upgrading of the environment by making the Metropolis more attractive with cleaner air, more pleasant urban waterways, more green parks with paths for cycling and walking, and more friendly urban and industrial areas. It had to be made environmentally, socially and economically attractive enough for foreign investments to begin to take root in this Metropolis. During the last 25 to 30 years, Bilbao's regeneration efforts have resulted in continuing transformations, which earned the faith of the locals, especially the sceptics, in the accepted Master Plan.

Strategy-3 Invest in Local Human Resources to Transform Bilbao into an Intelligent Metropolis: Thirdly the city needed to invest in human resources by constantly improving local skills and knowledge, which would be the foundation for intelligent cities and urban innovations. Enhanced and new universities, as well as other institutions of higher learning and research began to spring up. Most importantly, these institutions established close working relationships with businesses to promote products' added values while maintaining cost effectiveness with creativity, innovation and state-of-the-art technologies.

Strategy-4 Establish a Cultural Focus and Transform Bilbao into a World Class Centre for Visual Arts, Museums, Exhibitions, Musical Performances, Entertainments, Sports and other Cultural Activities: Fourthly the city needed to embrace cultural and artistic activities, supported by infrastructure and city scapes with high aesthetic value. Such a city would attract the world's attention and foreign visitors would want to visit such a city for cultural enrichment. Not only would world-class artists and performers of all kinds come, but visitors would also like to visit Bilbao to appreciate and enjoy a range of quality cultural activities. Most importantly, the new infrastructure asset systems designed and constructed were also world-class—the local and foreign participants, spectators and audience could only come away with fond memories, so much so that they would like to come back again and again.

Ibon Areso recalled that when the Guggenheim project was accepted, there were many objectors, pointing out that for the museum to be profitable, it would require 450,000 visitors annually. This seemed impossible at the time, as the Museum of Fine Arts could only manage 70,000 visitors a year. However, to everyone's surprise, during the first year of Guggenheim's opening, it registered 1,350,000 visitors. Today, the number of visitors still totals around 1 million a year. This has become known as the "Guggenheim effect", pointing out that high revenue can be generated from urban aesthetics.

Today, Bilbao is enjoying the social and economic benefits from many excellent urban developments, such as:

- The Bilbao Guggenheim Museum designed by Frank Gehry (opened in 1997);
- The Bilbao Fine Arts Museum (renovation and upgrading completed in 2001);
- The Estuary of Bilbao with continuing modernisation;
- Iberdrola Tower designed by César Pelli;
- The Port of Bilbao after transformation with State-of-the Art technologies;
- The Bilbao Exhibition Centre in Barakaldo (completed in 2004);
- The Zubizuri Pedestrian Bridge (completed in 1997) and the Prince of Spain Bridge;
- The La Alhondiga Cultural and Sports Centre (completed in 2005);
- The redevelopment of Zorrozaurre following a 2007 Master Plan designed by Zaha Hadid;
- The redevelopment of Abandoibarra urban area including the Euskalduna Conference Centre and Concert Hall and the Iberdrola Tower (The concept of urban redevelopment of Abandoibarra actually started in 1987);
- The 18 public parks in Bilbao as of 2010;
- The new Bilbao Airport Terminal designed by Santiago Calatrava;
- The Bagatza Station *Fosterito*;
- Metro Line-1 completed in 1995; Line 2 completed in 2011;

- The Metro Bilbao Underground Subway designed by Norman Foster that had started construction in 1988;
- The San Mamés stadium;

What most impressed us in EAROPH were the comprehensiveness of the transformation and the complexity of Ibon Areso's systemic approach, involving the entire social, economic and environmental government agencies, including the political leaders. With patience, determination and professional conviction, he was able to obtain the needed funding from all the relevant governments—from the Spanish Government to the semiautonomous Basque Government. In addition, he was able to establish a public company Bilbao Ria 2000 with the support of the two said Governments as well as the Provincial Council of Bizkaia, Bilbao City Government and later the City Government of Baracaldo, all of which provided public lands required by the urban development programme.

In this Editor's opinion, the Singapore project on Water Supply and Waste Disposal Management and the Bilbao Urban Regeneration Programme are the two that have been most successful in achieving the complete Systemic Asset Management Principles and Practice.

End of Report

NOTE: If you are interested in getting more details about the Transformation of Bilbao, you may download the following documents from the Internet:

“Bilbao's Strategic Evolution: From the Industrial to the Post-Industrial City” by Ibon Areso, 1st Deputy Mayor of Bilbao published by <riss.osaka-u.ac.jp>; and/or

Basque Country, October 2014, published by The Report Company:

“Q&A Ibon Areso – Mayor of Bilbao”.

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Part-2 Report on the 24th EAROPH 2014 World Congress Jakarta, Indonesia 10-14 August 2014 will be published in the next issue of the e-Bulletin.