

Cumbre 2010

FOURTH LATINO/LATIN AMERICAN SUMMIT OF THE GREAT PLAINS

CALL FOR PROPOSALS | DEADLINE: JANUARY 1, 2010

Human Mobility, the Promise of Development and Political Engagement Invitation to academics, policy-makers, businesses and civil society

MAY 13 - 15, 2010

EMBASSY SUITES HOTEL
DOWNTOWN/OLD MARKET
OMAHA, NE

OLLAS



OFFICE OF
LATINO/LATIN
AMERICAN STUDIES



NATIONAL ALLIANCE of LATIN AMERICAN & CARIBBEAN COMMUNITIES
ALIANZA NACIONAL de COMUNIDADES LATINO AMERICANAS y CARIBEÑAS



UNIVERSITY OF
Nebraska
Omaha COLLEGE OF ARTS
AND SCIENCES

A conference free to the community

dedicated to resetting the agenda from the bottom up and from the interior out!

Cumbre 2010 is cosponsored by the Office of Latino/Latin American Studies (OLLAS), the International Network on Migration and Development (INMD), the National Association of Latin American and Caribbean Communities (NALACC) and a variety of local and national organizations.

The conference is designated as one of the meetings that will be held in preparation for the 2010 IV Global Forum on Migration and Development (Mexico), and the IV World Social Forum on Migration (Ecuador).

Cumbre 2010 provides a forum for diverse, international and local publics to engage in critical dialogues that speak to this year's theme. Our main objectives are to share knowledge and increase our collective capacity to inform policy and effect change. Our focus is on Latino, migrant and Latin American communities within this hemisphere and across the globe. We welcome comparative analyses with, and experiences from, other migrant, ethnic and racial groups within and outside the United States.

Participants and presenters include academics, students, workers, elected officials, business representatives, policy makers and community organizations.

The format includes plenaries, town hall conversations and regular sessions presided by academic and non-academic panelists. For the first time, our summit will feature a panel with "the voices from the younger generation," and a workshop for migrant leaders, workers and Latino and Latin American community organizations. The latter will double as preparation for the international forums.

Special invitees include members of the Obama administration, state and university representatives, the faith community, Latin American governments, scholars and civil society organizations from across the region, Latin America and Europe.

Additional activities include a writing contest for Nebraska youth, a special musical presentation that brings together artists from Mexico and Omaha and informational booths from academic and community organizations.

For additional information visit our website:

www.unomaha.edu/ollas

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Contact OLLAS: 402-554-3835

(Hablamos Español, Inglés y Portugués)

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Dept. of Sociology & Anthropology
Nebraska
Omaha

Cumbre 2010

FOURTH LATINO/LATIN AMERICAN SUMMIT OF THE GREAT PLAINS

CONFERENCE THEME STATEMENT

Human Mobility, the Promise of Development and Political Engagement The social, cultural and political contexts informing our conference theme

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HEARTLAND
WORKERS
CENTER

UNIVERSITY OF
Nebraska
Omaha COLLEGE OF ARTS
AND SCIENCES

Cumbre 2010 takes place at the very moment when we will be assessing the full impact of the global economic crisis on migrant, Latino and Latin American communities. Looming large will be a political landscape where policy-makers still lack a comprehensive vision for sustainable human development across the globe, for this hemisphere, and for the Great Plains. The contradictory and, at times, undemocratic, free-market policies that have paraded as ‘development’ have wreaked havoc with many of our communities and displaced millions of people from their land. While this may conjure up images of the “South,” these policies were largely gestated in, or with the consent of, the “North.” The impact is felt as much in European cities as it is in places such as Omaha, Nebraska.

While goods, capital and services are free to move with ease, thanks to a development model that encourages deregulation, human mobility is subject to increasingly harsh rules and increasingly treated as a crime committed by willing offenders. In the United States, one Department of Homeland Security program, the so-called “287g,” deputizes local police forces to act as immigration agents. Italy’s new immigration law sets up citizen patrols and makes it a crime to aid unauthorized workers. France requires certain nationality groups for double visas to enter the country. The Dominican Republic entertains a constitutional reform to deny, native-born descendants of unauthorized Haitians, the right to citizenship. While the European Union issues a “Return Directive” and the U.S. seeks to speed up deportations, the logical and ethical questions of why people migrate and what rights all workers and families should enjoy, regardless of where they reside, continue to be pushed to the sidelines of policy discussions and enforcement actions.

Much of human mobility today is neither the result of choice, nor conditioned by ‘natural’ advantages or disadvantages that may lie on either side of the origin-destination divide. People, especially the most disadvantaged, are increasingly forced to either move or cling to precarious jobs or impoverished communities as the promise of development fades. Nebraska farmers, Latin American rural dwellers, California farmworkers, unemployed factory workers, children and a growing number of middle class professionals are increasingly on the move. Thousands die every year at the reinforced gates of their intended destinations. Few ponder whether these mothers, children and job-seekers deserve to be criminalized and punished for their journeys in search of nothing more than a place to work and a life with dignity for their families.

Public discussions about the 200 million people living outside their country of origin and the millions more migrating within their own countries, seldom go deep enough to consider the failure of development as the root cause of these different phenomena. Nor do they afford us meaningful arenas to critically engage with diverse and multiple publics in a collective search for more just societal models. If the current economic crisis has abated by May 2010, we will likely be asked to believe that all is well. If this is so, we would again have lost the opportunity to engage in a critical conversation about how this promise of development often rests on policies and practices that generate brutal inequality, environmental destruction, forced migration, human and labor rights violations and discontent. Moreover, any discussion about the moral and ethical implications of unjust public policies will likely be viewed as external to policy-making, which, too often, is informed by short-term political considerations.

As the first decade of the century comes to an end, the promise of development, born during the early post-colonial era, has lost credibility at home and abroad. In some quarters, steps are being taken toward alternative visions, but these are still too timid. New and old hierarchies of social citizenship are reconfigured and certain ethnic, racial and income groups are disproportionately excluded from health care, education and internationally-guaranteed rights. Large numbers of working poor are subject to state and non-state violence, racism and xenophobia. The psychological and socio-cultural impacts of these phenomena on children, women, men, families and entire nations are understudied and under-addressed. International organizations speak of a transformed vision still to be realized. As 2010 is upon us, narratives of hope and inclusion are crashing against shrill voices of hate and a dangerous fortress mentality that is increasingly taking hold in nations and local communities at home and abroad.

This raises a final question as to what kinds of civic engagement, social action and political participation strategies are required for the better of these tendencies to prevail. At least two important developments are of interest. The first is the growing presence and visibility of civil society organizations dedicated to positive social change. These range from human rights organizations to migrant, transnational and Latino organizations across the world, in Latin America and in the region. The second is a growing number of global forums bringing together governments, academics, and civil society. These bodies are advancing novel agendas for development and migration rooted in principles of equality and the defense of human, labor and civil rights. Latin America is emerging as a new leader in this area. Seldom are we given the opportunity to learn about these important and alternative policy-making bodies or how local communities and organizations can partake of, and inform, their initiatives. It is our hope that Cumbre 2010 widens the space so that the private sector, grassroots organizations and other stakeholders can actively engage and begin the work of resetting policy agendas from the interior out—not just from the centers of power inward.