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UCLG vice-president Schuster advocates walking as the new 'social transport' model for cities

5th World Congress of Cities for Mobility, Stuttgart, Germany, 3-5 July, 2011. **By Jonathan Andrews**

The mayor of Stuttgart, Germany, and UCLG vice-president and Chair of the UCLG Urban Mobility Committee, Wolfgang Schuster, has strengthened the concept of social space and social transport by signing Walk 21's International Charter for Walking during Stuttgart's 5th Cities for Mobility Conference.

By signing the charter, the mayor hopes to demonstrate Stuttgart's on-

to find solutions to mobility challenges by focusing on human relationships and on local communities, with walking and cycling holding the key.

Bronwen Thornton, Development Director from Walk 21, believes it's about giving people a choice. "We want to promote walking and get cities thinking about it," she said. "We want them to build for walking and we want people to choose walking as the preferred mode."

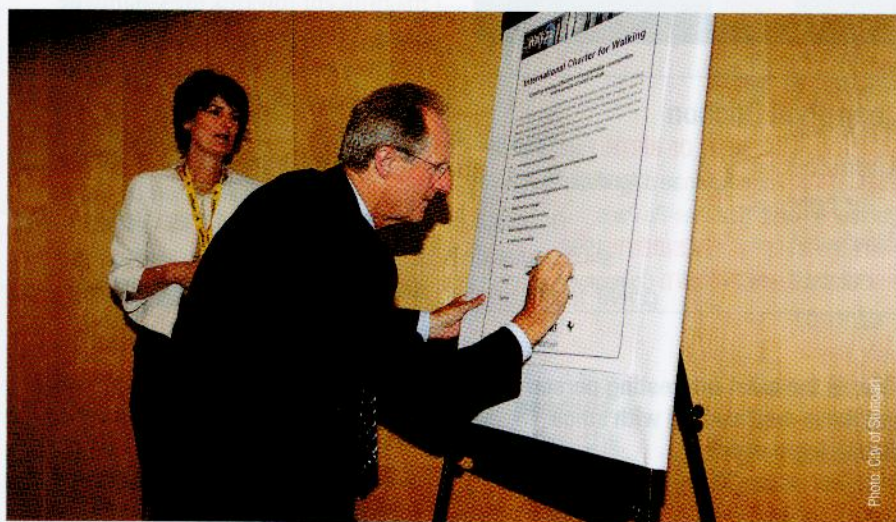
economies. In contrast, travelling by car impedes social relations and leads to a limited perception of the environment and a weaker community feeling of belonging.

Wolfgang Forderer, Cities for Mobility Head of Policy Planning, and Manager of the UCLG Committee on Urban Mobility, believes that the use of cars cannot be excluded but, in conjunction with cars, cities can promote more sustainable modes of transport.

"We always wanted to avoid making this event a 'car hating conference' as cars exist and people like to drive cars," he explained. "But people are now cycling more, walking more, there is a greater awareness out there in which you have to provide a mobility mix."

Forderer emphasized also that the ideas gleaned from the conference will be put forward to the UCLG secretariat on mobility to increase knowledge sharing between non-governmental organizations (NGOs), retailers, companies and cities. "It's not enough for local governments to talk to each other," he said. "It is very important for UCLG to be involved on a working level, not on a political level, but on a working level with all stakeholders. Because in some cities there is a complete change of mayors every three or four years, but the NGOs stay, the companies stay, and the universities stay. There is this point of stability and continuity when you involve these partners."

Mayor Schuster closed the conference by emphasizing the need for cities to work together. "Cooperation of cities within the scope of the work of UCLG can lead to the more rapid spread of exemplary solutions, greater sustainability of the urban transport systems and consequently to a fairer globalization in our one world." ■



The mayor of Stuttgart, Wolfgang Schuster, signing the charter with Walk 21's Bronwen Thornton

going success in delivering walkable communities and underpin future projects throughout the city. The conference was told that walking is often ignored in public transport yet, after cars, accounts for the highest mode of transport.

The 350 participants from over 40 countries, including political decision makers, transport and urban planning experts, and private sector representatives, heard how cities need to re-define the concept of social space and

Stuttgart, and other cities that sign up to the charter, will work with Walk 21 in developing a strategic direction including a range of resources and tools to enable them to deliver more walking options.

In one of the key presentations, Daniel Sauter, from Urban Mobility Research, showed how the perception of cities changes when people travel by car, bicycle or foot. Non-motorized transport helps to strengthen social relations, preserve the environment, live healthier lives and at the same time enhances local