



Local and Regional Governments Contributing to Habitat III Policy Units 10-12 November 2015 - Barcelona

Briefing of the Session on Habitat III Policy Units **Policy Unit 1: Right to the City and Cities for All**

On 11-12 November 2015, UCLG, on behalf of the Global Taskforce, invited local government networks, partners and experts from 8 of the 10 Habitat III Policy Units, to analyze and discuss the “key drivers for action” from the Habitat III Issue Papers and their relationship to the work of the Policy Units. This exercise led to a rich debate and the exchange of a diverse range of perspectives across sectoral boundaries.

Participants identified several key messages to be reflected and explored across the Policy Units:

- For local governments dealing with sustainable development on the ground, **the New Urban Agenda cannot be separated from the 2030 Agenda**, particularly SDG11.
- Localizing these agendas is a political task, rather than a technical exercise. **Political commitment to the value of localization** is needed in the design, implementation and monitoring stages of all international agendas.
- Local governments have a number of particular characteristics: a) **proximity** to citizens; b) link to a **geographical area**; c) flexibility and **responsiveness**; d) ability to promote citizen **participation**. This gives them the potential to play a unique role in the achievement of the New Urban Agenda. Therefore, **local democracy and decentralization** should be at the heart of the New Urban Agenda.
- The New Urban Agenda cannot limit itself to towns and cities. It must be **territorial agenda** that integrates peri-urban and rural areas, as well as regional systems.
- The ultimate goal of the New Urban Agenda should be to guarantee the **Right to the City** for all in a context of increased prosperity and environmental sustainability.
- **Sub-national governments need a seat at the table in the governance architecture following Habitat III** in recognition of their legitimacy as a sphere of government and in order that the vision of local governments is included in the process.

Briefing structure

This document provides an overview of policy recommendations in relation to Policy Unit 1.

For each related issue paper, the first section, “local government recommendations”, summarizes UCLG’s contributions to the “key drivers for action” in the Issue Papers related to the Policy Unit. The second section, “comments and debate from the meeting participants” brings together the diverse and sometimes contradictory ideas that emerged during the sessions on 11-12 November.

Please note this is not negotiated text and simply aims to be a useful resource for individuals and organizations involved in the Habitat III process.



Issue Paper 1: Inclusive cities

Local government recommendations

- The **Right to the City** is a holistic and **crosscutting approach** that can contribute to the New Urban Agenda. As cities and their territories are spaces for the exercise and fulfillment of rights, both individual and collective, they must ensure fair, universal, democratic and sustainable access to the resources, services, goods and opportunities. The Right to the City approach was endorsed by UCLG in 2011 through the adoption of the “Global Charter-Agenda for Human Rights in the City”; **the Charter, which is a basis for a new social contract**, could contribute to the discussions for Habitat III.
- An **integrated approach for inclusive cities** needs to stress the links between social inclusion, participatory democracy and human rights.
- **Culture** should be included among the examples of urban basic services whose universal access should be guaranteed with adequate policies and institutional frameworks.
- Local authorities can identify inequalities and target policies efficiently by **empowering all inhabitants** to fully participate in local political, social, economic and cultural life. Furthermore, local governments can **tackle social exclusion and urban violence** through a myriad of different initiatives and partnerships (e.g. neighborhood regeneration, social housing, migrants’ integration, targeted social assistance, youth programs, etc.).
- Inclusive cities need **human-rights-based approaches** to public services delivery and independent mechanisms of protection (e.g. ombudspersons, complaint procedures, etc).
- **New patterns of urban planning** and frameworks for **land tenure regulation** are instrumental to fight spatial and social segregation.
- Local economic development should aim to ensure **inhabitants’ wellbeing**, rely on endogenous processes and create jobs.
- Inclusive policies should clearly cover all **disadvantaged and minority groups** and include tailored measures to guarantee the equality and participation of each.
- Rather than only referring to slum dwellers, the inclusive agenda should also stress the importance of avoiding the **criminalization of public spaces occupants**.
- It’s imperative to insist on the link between **environmental justice and social inclusion**, due to the fact that marginalized communities tend to be located in environmentally at risk areas.
- In addition to the connection that must be ensured among all the actors that play a role towards inclusive cities, a physical connection must also be ensured by providing **quality and inclusive public spaces and facilities**, which are the areas for the contemporary democratic social manifestations.

Comments and debate from the meeting participants

- Among the groups to take into account for local inclusive processes, we need to include **refugees and migrants, vulnerable groups and children under 10**. Policies on **children and youth** should be strengthened.
- When enhancing access to information at local level, we need to ensure additionally that citizens can participate in the correspondent **consultation and deliberation processes**.
- When exemplifying local actions on spatial connection that can tackle income inequality, we need to go beyond the policy of connecting the city through public transportation; on the contrary, we need to focus on the **model of compact cities**, where jobs and services are available in the same neighborhood reducing, thus, the need to travel across the whole city.
- When referring to local actions on capacity development that can tackle income inequality, attention must be paid to include **gender equality** in all the technical areas as well as on job creation. Furthermore, any action geared to tackle income inequality must be framed in a



multidimensional approach that includes aspects related to mentalities, opportunities, training and wages.

- When referring to the national policies that enable or constrain local actors in achieving inclusive outcomes, competitive processes between cities geared towards reaching the **lowest taxation level** is currently damaging cities.
- The concept of the **Right to the City** needs to be properly defined and its principles clearly related to the existing frameworks on human rights.
- When referring to local finances, **long-term investments** are critical for local development.
- The private sector should be **socially responsible**. Companies need to be accountable in their relationship with social inclusion and environmental responsibility.
- The **human rights approach** is missing and this is what social inclusion is about. We need to focus less on urban growth and development.
- Analysis of **income inequality** is lacking. We need to avoid segregation and promote a mixed environment where everybody can have access to the same services.
- We need to enhance **local governments' capacities** by increasing experiences and the exchange of best practices.
- We need to refer to the **notion of commons**: public spaces, buildings, land.
- Wealth needs to be **redistributed by the State** and not only by local governments.
- The concept of **spatial inclusion** is lacking. Space is key when we talk about social inclusion, as exclusion is reflected in space. For this reason we need **polycentric cities**.
- Growth and development must be engines for the goal of the inclusive city. The concept of "**buen vivir**" (good living) should respond to the needs of the population rather than focusing on market growth.
- Social inclusion only addresses poor people, while rich people further **privatize spaces**.
- Local governments and citizens need to increase their interaction. Financing should be allocated to **participatory democracy**.
- We should reflect if we want to continue experiencing the **growth of metropolitan areas** and if we want **rural areas to move to urban centers**.

Issue Paper 2: Migration and refugees in urban areas

Local government recommendations

- It should be stressed the idea of strengthening the **understanding of cultural diversity** among local government officials and other agents dealing with migrants and refugees.
- **Cultural activities** have demonstrated to contribute to the policies and strategies towards broader integration and inclusion.
- It's instrumental to strengthen the capacity of local governments to **deliver key services** to the newcomers in a difficult context and to convince the population about the merits of this action.
- Promote the **productive power of migrants** as a development opportunity for the territories.
- The New Urban Agenda should emphasize the role of local and regional governments on **resilience and disaster risk reduction**. In this regard, as most local governments lack the required knowledge, financial and technical capacities that need to be integrated into the urban development strategies, support the implementation of **Sendai Framework** to allow cities to identify these gaps and take action.



Comments and debate from the meeting participants

- When facing situations of **displacement**, national and local authorities need financial support, in addition to technical help.
- Local authorities and other actors need specific procedures to be able to recognize the **professional skills** that migrants and displaced populations bring to their host communities. On the other side, the **right to work** lacks a specific recognition and the concept of economic solidarity should also be included.
- Besides the work with local government officials, the idea of raising **awareness on cultural diversity** should also be strengthened among citizens.
- It's crucial the concept of **co-development** and decentralization cooperation between cities of origin and destination: through a city-to-city cooperation that avoids State intervention, migrants can contribute to the development of their home city.
- We need further **indicators to benchmark** and assess the local authorities' policy on migration.
- We need to stress the **humanitarian approach** and, rather than focusing solely on the economic dimension, propose values on how we want to take into account migrants.
- Through solidarity or multicultural projects, the local level is a good scale to humanize the work on **global citizenship**.
- **Rights of minorities** need to be protected by raising awareness and relying on a multi-stakeholder approach.
- Empower local authorities by **engaging migrants** and include them as actors in the dialogues.

Issue Paper 3: Safer cities

Local government recommendations

- **Restorative justice** with urban communities and **education** based on self-esteem and artistic creativity can help reintegrate the mostly young perpetrators of offences.
- It's necessary to frame the intervention of the **police in a human rights framework** and work on the police's accountability towards local communities. Additionally, as "civilian security" can sometimes lead to increasing violence, it's important to ensure "**public security**" by focusing on the accountability and human rights frameworks of the interventions.
- Public spaces and planning need to be adapted to **gender mainstreaming** and specific work need to be done on gender-based violence and protection of victims of aggression.

Comments and debate from the meeting participants

- Attention must be paid to **workplace violence** and its relationship with **gender discrimination**.
- The view of **ethnic minorities** on safer cities should be taken into account in order to understand their perception of the city regarding security.
- As perpetrators of urban crimes are often **youngsters**, this can be prevented by providing job and education opportunities and, thus, protect them.



