



GLOBAL TASKFORCE
OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS
FOR POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA
TOWARDS HABITAT III

Analysis of the Habitat III Framework Document Policy Unit 4 – Urban Governance, Capacity and Institutional Development

1) A brief analysis of the Framework Paper (one or two paragraphs with the "key messages", maximum half a page).

The key principles for the New Urban Agenda in terms of governance are identified as universality; diversity; a holistic approach; proximity (including application of the principle of subsidiarity) and flexibility; territoriality; links with 2030 Agenda; adequate funding and capacity, being transformative and action oriented.

The four main pillars of urban governance, capacity and institutional development are identified as: 1) multi-level governance, 2) participation and equity, 3) metropolitan governance and 4) capacity building.

Multi-level governance (MLG) need both vertical (intergovernmental) and horizontal (inter-sectoral and inter-municipal) coordination and should promote a dynamic citizen participation. MLG should be based on based on the principles of subsidiarity and effective decentralization (including adequate financing and equalization mechanisms). Good quality laws, rooted in a system of accountability and transparency, are critical for an adequate governance system.

Participatory governance and equity require a "culture of participation", supported by an adequate legal framework, to promote empowerment of citizens, particularly women, youth, disadvantaged groups and minorities, improved access to information (open data), accountability and transparency (i.e. codes of conduct and anticorruption mechanisms), better communication (i.e. new technologies), support to civil society autonomous organization (i.e. space, budget), "co-production" and "co-responsibility" for projects/services.

Metropolitan governance should overcome fragmentation and externalities through the integration of the full metropolitan functional region, through adequate legislation, institutional arrangements and financing, to reduce inequalities, promote economic productivity and environmental sustainability. There is not one model to fit all. Local governments should be involved in processes of metropolitan and sub-national administrative reforms

Create a system-wide capacity building alliance, led by local governments, with adequate resources, to strengthen stakeholders' capacities (local governments, civil society, business, and communities). Promote city-to-city cooperation, peer to peer exchange and knowledge sharing, both North-South, South-South, North-North.

2) Identify messages or proposals that are problematic for us: a brief comment or propose an alternative wording.

Key issues proposed are not always pertinent and are repetitive.

For example in "challenges". "Multi-level governance" in itself is not a 'challenge' as such. In order to frame the issue as a challenge, the wording should clearly define what is understood by 'good' multi-level governance and focus on the potential obstacles to achieving it. E.g. *"the pillars of a robust multilevel governance system are appropriate National Urban and Territorial Policies (NUTPs), an effective decentralization process, and mechanisms that promote a dynamic citizen participation."*

The 'challenge', in this case, would not be multi-level governance but "avoiding top-down centrally planned national urban policies", or "ensuring a clear and effective distribution of responsibilities and resources between levels of government" or "overcoming vertical and horizontal coordination problems among different spheres of government".

Disagreements/Controversies. The wording on the relationship between multi-level governance and national urban policies is unclear. Possible alternative language: "There is debate over how to develop national urban policies that recognize and harness the role of cities to promote national growth from the bottom up and to tackle challenges like climate change while, at the same time, avoid a top-down, one-size-fits-all approach".

"New 21st century challenges for metropolitan governance". Some concepts are not clearly expressed. For example, the meaning of "Shift from governing location to governing flows" is unclear.

"Weak civil society has led to a democratic deficit" In many places civil society requires more open, responsive institutions, rather than 'capacity building' in order to be able to participate in local decision-making.

Key transformations

I would not refer to 'interface' between government and civil society as it sounds like a computer programme. 'Relationship' would be better. 'Dialogue at eye level' also sounds strange. 'Face-to-face dialogue' would be better.

3) Are there critical points or questions that are absent in the Framework Paper? Which ones? Suggest a very brief text that we can send to HIM.

Challenges: better address "key" challenges that should with key facts and figures to introduce, for example, the consequences of weak or incomplete decentralization processes and recentralization in the last years (i.e. unfunded mandates), or the consequences of inexistence or inadequacy of "National Urban and Territorial Policies" in a majority of countries on urban governance and increasing inequalities (both between and within cities and territories).

On capacity building: capacity building should promote a "systemic approach" mobilizing different modalities of education and training to overcome the broad gaps that confront many countries from professional to administrative capacities to manage urbanization (i.e. urban planners, engineers, etc). This will require the mobilization of high-level academic or specialized institutions to adapt professional careers to different modalities of technical courses, peer-to-peer learning or in-work place training. The system need an adequate human resource management design based on transparency and merit, with adequate wages to recognize sub-national governments' employees' role. Also *particular capacities* are going to be essential in local institutions to build for local governance in the 21st century. Examples include the capacity to effectively manage citizen participation, gender mainstreaming awareness across all departments, the ability to understand and protect the digital security of public institutions and citizens."

On participation: A critical reflection on the **potential and limits of digital technologies** in urban governance is missing. E.g. "The use of digital participation tools must be combined with direct mobilization (i.e. public meetings and local referenda). Digital participation should not imply the exclusion of those with limited access to digital tools or capacity to use them. The digitization of local government administrations implies new challenges in terms of data management and respect for the privacy rights of citizens"

The issue of **gender** in governance and institutions is hardly explored. This should be mentioned in the sections on challenges and controversies. Specific targets and indicators of women's political participation should be proposed.

Comments of the UCLG Committee on Culture

- Very poor understanding of the key role of culture (heritage, creativity, diversity) as a key dimension of sustainable cities.
- The key message could be "urban governance must recognise cultural actors as key allies in building sustainable cities. Cities should promote autonomous / independent NGOs / Civil Society organisations in the areas of freedom of speech, heritage, creativity and diversity. Also, cities need local media (TV stations, community radio, local press, internet) to create real "local meaning" to citizens.