



## Human mobility and Right to the City: How can cities contribute to a human rights-based governance of migrations?

*Side event presented by the UCLG Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights*

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### Partner organizations

Global Platform for the Right to the City, Organization for a Universal Citizenship

*« No distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs ».*

**Article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights**

*“We commit ourselves to the sustainable leveraging of natural and cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, in cities and human settlements, as appropriate, through integrated urban and territorial policies and adequate investments at the national, subnational and local levels, to safeguard and promote cultural infrastructures and sites, museums, indigenous cultures and languages, as well as traditional knowledge and the arts, highlighting the role that these play in rehabilitating and revitalizing urban areas and in strengthening social participation and the exercise of citizenship.”*

**Article 38 of the New Urban Agenda**

### Migration is essentially an urban issue

By 2050, the urban population will rise from today's 3.9 billion to around 6.4 billion. Migrations play an important role in this evolution, transforming cities, regions and territories into living spaces characterized by increasing degrees of diversity and human mobility.

According to the International Organization for Migration, *"In the world's twenty largest cities, one out of every five people is a migrant. In many of these cities, migrants make up a third of the total population"*.

While some migrants have high levels of qualification and are able to integrate quickly through their insertion in the labour market, migration still appears as an imposed fact for the vast majority. For many migrants, the city represents a place for survival, as migrants usually leave increasingly adverse rural conditions, due to factors such as climate change, the failure of rural development policies, harsh competitiveness conditions for the rural populations of the global south created by free trade agreements with more "competitive" countries or as a result of land grabbing processes.

While migrants settle in cities hoping to access a more dignified life, urban services and a **Right to the City**, a struggling economic context only allows them to settle down in the socio-spatial margins of the city.

### **Right to the City and universal access to rights, a key condition for the sustainable management of territories**

Migrants' citizenship and supportive actions is therefore at the core of issues linked to the future of urban spaces and the prevention of socio-spatial segregation processes. On the ability of local governments, citizens and national urban policies to guarantee everyone's right to the city will very much depend the peaceful development of our mostly urban societies. How to achieve these goals?

The Right to the City entails the *"equitable use and enjoyment of cities and towns, with the aim of promoting inclusion and ensuring that all inhabitants, from present and future generations, without discrimination of any kind, can live and create just, safe, accessible, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements as common goods actively contributing to inhabitants prosperity and quality of life"* (Global Platform for the Right to the City, 2016).

The Right to the City supposes a new dimension of urban citizenship that this is no longer based on the possession of a residence allowance, but on people's ability to contribute to intercultural and democratic urban spaces that promote solidarity and are the product of collective co-creation.

The Right to the City lies on the full protection, guarantee and protection of universal human rights. States and local governments have a shared responsibility in implementing universal human rights. Local authorities, being the closest to the citizens, are often those who translate these rights into concrete actions hand by hand with civil society, playing a key role in rights such as freedom of expression and assembly, the right to food, housing, security or to a life free from discrimination ... However, their task is always difficult, given that the management of migratory flows by States conditions the exercise of migrants rights to the possession of a residence permit. Likewise, the increasing financial constraints of local authorities prevent them to properly tackle the growth of poverty in urban spaces.

Despite these trends, and being aware that a sustainable management of territories can only be based on actions aimed at restoring equality, local governments continue to implement mechanisms to enshrine internal and international migrants' access to rights, providing humanitarian reception sometimes beyond state or international support, through cooperation with civil society that make migrants' real inclusion possible.

Local governments and their administrations are therefore called to play a preponderant role in the inclusion of migrants, either through direct actions or in coordination with different institutional levels, non-governmental actors, grassroots movements and the rest of urban citizens.

- How can we analyse emigration in term of access to Human Rights and prevent human trafficking?
- Why is it essential to work on a sustainable inclusion of migrants in host cities and territories since their arrival?
- What practices can guarantee the universal rights of migrants and their participation in the local environment, beyond states' prevailing "security-based" policies?
- How to take into account the specificity of minors and women migrants and protect the more vulnerable kind of migrants?
- How to establish mutual help and solidarity networks to achieve a universal guarantee of human rights and the right to the city between departure and host cities? What role for cities networks?
- What position for universal rights in the management of migratory flows?
- What voice for local governments in the global management of migration flows?

The main goals of this roundtable will be:

- To shed some light on different practices carried out by local governments to make access to universal rights of migrants “sanctuary” in the local environment, based on a dialogue between local officials, researchers, civil society and the UN system of Human Rights protection.
- To contribute to the emergence of a united voice of local governments for a global governance of migrations that respects universal rights and counts on local governments.
- To strengthen the network of cities and civil society organizations for universal rights and the right to the city

### Speakers

- **Antonio Aniesa**, Assistant of Patrick Braouezec, President of Plaine Commune, Co-President of UCLG Commission on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights
- **Lola López**, Responsable of migrants’ inclusión at Barcelona Cityhall
- **Abdoulaye Thimbo**, Mayor of Pikine
- **Joseph Schechla**, Habitat International Coalition, Human and Land Rights Network, Cairo
- **Amélie Canonne**, Emmaus International, Organization for a Universal Citizenship
- **Amina El Oualid**, Deputy -President of Nador Municipal Council
- **Ruben Fuentes Rodríguez**, Director of Attention to Migrants and their families, Mexico City (Secretary for rural and community development).

Moderación: Magali Fricaudet, Coordinadora de la Comisión de Inclusión Social, Democracia Participativa y Derechos Humanos de CGLU