



UCLG Committee
on Social Inclusion,
Participatory Democracy
and Human Rights



MEETING MINUTES

COMITTEE ON SOCIAL INCLUSION, PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The Right to the City in the New Urban Agenda – Towards inclusive, democratic and sustainable cities

CGLU'S EXECUTIVE BUREAU (12 JULY 2015)

Summary: This meeting, organized with the support of the UCLG World Secretariat, gathered representatives of local governments and civil society of Global Platform for the Right to the City in order to articulate messages and strategies of political advocacy towards Habitat III. The right to the city, contained in the Charter Agenda for Human Rights in the City of UCLG is an axis of this joint work with civil society.

During the meeting, perspectives and expectations of civil society and local governments on the definition of the New Urban Agenda were exchanged. Then, joint efforts around a common agenda were defined, due to the will of governments to have greater visibility and open up to other organizations in other parts of the world.

At the end of the meeting, a group was structured to gather common proposals on the right to the city starting from four guidelines, which are: (1) human rights in the city; (2) sustainable use of land; (3) participatory governance and (4) inclusive economic development.

For more details on this meeting, or to engage in the work of political advocacy on the right to the city, please contact m.fricaudet@uclg.org

Introduction of Patrick Braouezec, Co-Chair of the Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights of UCLG.

Mr. Patrick Braouezec thanked all the present and in particular the World Secretariat of UCLG for allowing, with its logistical support, the participation of civil society's partners at this meeting. He highlighted the importance of the progress made since the creation of the Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights of UCLG until the recognition of the right to the city for all, and particularly for the most vulnerable groups.

He also recalled the aim of this meeting, which was to coordinate the priorities and actions of local governments, UCLG and Civil Society towards Habitat III and beyond -because Habitat III is a stage, but the idea is also to strengthen us to insert the right to the city in every day's public policies.

1. Why is it important to insert the Right to the City in Habitat III?

The challenges of Habitat III: The representation of Local Governments – Josep Roig, UCLG Secretary

Josep Roig, Secretary General of UCLG, opened the meeting explaining the four cornerstones of the organization of Barcelona City Council, which was just released by the new mayor of Barcelona, Ada Colau: social rights, rights of citizens, transparency, and participation. These elements are in line with the work of the Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights.

According to the Secretary, Habitat III is an opportunity to gather the initiative of many networks and many cities. Even though this Conference is focused on the work of the United Nations, it is still an opportunity to create our own common agenda, from local perspectives. It is difficult to summarize this work on a single line, but UCLG has clear ideas which guide its expectations for the 21st century.

The working group of local governments, the [Global Task Force](#), coordinated by UCLG, can cover different both territorial and thematic approaches. Local governments have a more integrated and territorial perspective, rather than a sectorial point of view. The right to the city is one of these integrative visions. The work of advocacy of UCLG is based on an action of collective intelligence, divided into three major working groups: the metropolitan areas, intermediate cities and rural regions.

For UCLG, Habitat III is a process rather than a target. In this process, it is important to bear in working groups and committees of UCLG, because they have experience and expertise.

To accomplish this advocacy work, UCLG acts in conjunction with civil society, in the territories and at international level. Thus, points of convergence are identified and shared with international institutions.

Therefore, UCLG participates in the Partners Assembly summoned by UN-Habitat in order to prepare Habitat III Summit, although local governments also aspire to have a specific recognition.

Finally, the work of the Global Task Force focuses not only on Habitat III but also in the other events of the international community to be developed now on until December 2015: Addis Ababa Summit on financing development, United Nations General Assembly on post 2015 goals, and COP21 on climate change in Paris in December 2015.

The expectations of civil society regarding Habitat III - Nelson Saule

Nelson Saule is coordinator of Polis Institute, a founding member of the Global Platform on the Right to the city that brings together 18 civil society organizations and local governments, such as the Brazilian Association of Municipalities and the Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights of UCLG.

With respect to Habitat III, civil society wants to continue Habitat II's commitments on sustainable and inclusive cities.

The advocacy work has also been enriched by the collaboration with researchers from the University College of London, who bring expertise on the right to the city. The researchers analyzed national reports available for Habitat III and found that, among the reports produced, few mention the right to the city.

One of the biggest concerns of the Platform is to participate to the definition of the New Global Urban Agenda.

Representatives of the Global Platform for the Right to the City participated in the two preparatory meetings for Habitat III (PREPCOM). However, the preparation of the summit is seen as an unclear process, where stands out the difficulties for the participation of civil society due to a very bureaucratic organization, with many scattered documents.

The Global Platform for the Right to the City aims to work on different themes: human rights in the city; sustainable use of land; governance, participation, participatory processes for the design and implementation of public policies; economic development based on social inclusion, considering migrants, young people and excluded minorities, as well as workers in informal economy.

2. Sharing perspectives on the right to the city

In this part, each representative of the present organizations were asked to answer the following questions: What is the Right to the City for you? How can we include this concept in the New Urban Agenda?

Fernando Santomauro, Director of International Relations of the Municipality of Guarulhos (Brazil), remember that Guarulhos was Co-President of the Committee and played a historic role in it. Due to internal and administrative reasons, Guarulhos is not part of the collective presidency anymore, but still has the will to support the work of the Committee.

Guarulhos always worked for the right to the city from its participatory approach. They have experience in implementing participatory budgets such as those from a citizen assembly on health. He also undertook important work on the issue of the memory of the military dictatorship.

Ivy Mayumi de Moraes, on behalf of Nadia Campeão, Vice Mayor of São Paulo related the right to the city to the full exercise of urban citizenship.

This concept also has an urban implication, in which the role of local governments is essential to converge efforts so the public space is managed in a more human way.

In its public policies, Sao Paulo has an approach on the Right to the City from both cultural participation as from inclusive territorial planning and management of public spaces. Moreover, as to Habitat III, Sao Paulo feels that Brazilian government is quite opened to think about the Right to the City from and for the people.

Sao Paulo is interested in acting on a common plan of work around some common axes with civil society.

Marcelo Montenegro, from the NGO Action Aid Brazil, works on the issues of gender relations in the city. It is an axis that raises several issues such as the safety of women in the public spaces, women's access to public spaces and the participation of women in strategic planning according to their needs.

Ronaldo Coelho, from Habitat for Humanity Brazil, works on the effectiveness of participation mechanisms to address social exclusion.

Sonia Maria Dias represents WIEGO, a network that works on the perspective of the rights of workers in the informal economy. When focusing on the right to the city, it is also important to think about it from the economic diversity perspective and ensure the participation of these workers, which are the majority in many cities, and think about their contribution to the development of the city, since these workers are the key actors of their cities and its economy.

WIEGO believes that Habitat III has to instigate the thinking on this diversity and also on models of hybrid and multifunctional economic development.

Fernanda Lima, from Brazil Slum Dwellers International, stressed the need for dialogue to solve conflicts over the different uses of the city. She also reinforced the need for quality public policies, designed, implemented and monitored along with the inhabitants. It is very important to open more spaces for civil society and work with it on the basis of agreements such as the Charters for the right to the city. The issue of water and sanitation is vital and poses a great challenge as well. Finally, Habitat III should also recognize the social function of urban property.

For **Eduardo Tadeu**, President of the Brazilian Association of Municipalities (ABM), the right to the city would be like an umbrella which covers the set of human rights in the city. He believes that Habitat III must adopt the concept of the right to the city even if it's a challenge, given the pressure from the markets. It is important that public authorities have the resources to guarantee the right to the city. Finally, he highlighted the importance of citizen participation, both in local and international level regarding the negotiations in Habitat III.

Silvia Ayala from the Catalan Fund for Cooperation and Development, who coordinates the working group on Migrations of UCLG, insists in ensuring the right to the city for migrants and from them. In several municipalities, it was already shown how co-development policies can help to fight against racism.

Ernesto Falla, Advisor for International Relations of the Mayor of Bogota, on behalf of the City of Bogotá presented the right to the city and the city of rights as a challenge. In Bogotá it was held a rights-based approach, but it is important to ensure that the right to the city remains in favor of citizens when local governments change. Ernesto Falla refers to the Declaration of Bogotá, produced after the meeting "Dialogue of Latin American cities," which took place last 3- 4 June, and where the right to the city is recognized. He also stated that it is important to relate the right to the city to the challenges related with climate change. Therefore, beyond corresponding only to a sectorial policy, the right to the city covers all branches of sustainable urban development.

3. Bases for coordinated strategies between the different networks and civil society

How to think together in defining the New Urban Agenda? How to perform strategic alliances between local governments and civil society?

Emilia Saiz, Deputy Secretary General of UCLG, recalled the importance of opening spaces where different narratives can converge. She also stressed the need to seek strategies for the opening of spaces in the process of Habitat III, both to local governments and civil society.

Those who participated in the Second Preparatory Committee (PrepCom), held in Nairobi in April, noted the difficulty of opening such spaces. Emilia applauded the joint initiatives held in PrepCom at Nairobi and asked what would be the future common steps to open these spaces of participation. She also highlighted the joint initiative that was taken in recent weeks to send letters to advocate for the appointment of experts, to which UN Habitat handle the preparation of studies and recommendations about ten topics, the Policy Units. Civil society and local governments joined in proposing common experts for these Policy Units. It is also important that the articulation mechanisms that we are creating can be open to more actors.

Then Perla Vazquez, from Habitat International Coalition, who works on the Platform, presented the Platform tools and methodological working groups, which are open to local governments.

The groups are: 1. Forms of advocacy of the Global Platform for the Right to the City; 2. Research and training on the right to the city; 3. Communication, Awareness and Cultural Dimension of the Global Platform for the Right to the City; 4. Articulation and Alliances of the Global Platform.

On the other hand, she remembered that the Platform, along with the University College of London, has made an analysis of the national reports and the regional report of the Economic Commission for Latin America (CEPAL).

Perla invites UCLG to join the global campaign that will take place in October 1, in the occasion of World Habitat Day.

It is also important to point this union and work together in the official meetings, as the possible extraordinary PREP COM that may take place in New York in September 2015.

Nelson Saule highlights the importance of making more media actions.

Perla announces the upcoming events, where it's possible to keep building this link between civil society and local governments:

- In June 20 and 21, will be held in Athens an international meeting on The Right to Housing, against austerity and evictions, organized by the European Platform for the Right to the City and Housing.
- From November 29th to December 3th the Summit Africities will take place in Johannesburg
- On December 4th, during the summit of UCLG, there is the possibility of a specific meeting in Saint-Denis on the links between civil society and local governments, from COP21 to Habitat III. Within this framework, another meeting will be organized with civil society to continue weaving such alliances. It would be a meeting with a greater presence of representatives of civil society from other continents.
- The last PrepCom will be held in Jakarta, in July 2016.

Perla added that the Platform for the Right to the City does not end with Habitat III, but rather will probably go further. Among the actions foreseen in the longer term, it is contemplated the creation of an observatory on the right to the city.

Claudio Sule, from the Fondation Sule for Social Inclusion in Chile, stressed the importance of starting from concrete practices of local governments that implement interesting public policies, such as Canoas where there is a very interesting citizen participation work implemented, or Bogota with the route of Rights, or the city of Mexico with its policies of neighborhood improvement.

Therefore, It would be important to decentralize the work of the Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights through the creation of thematic coordinations with two or three cities.

Magali Fricaudet, coordinator of the Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights discloses a proposal from the meeting held in Bogotá on June 3, with the presence of several local governments, to imagine a decentralized organization that works on setting up proposals promoting the right to the city. It is proposed that each city or municipality association coordinates the work on one of the issues on the global platform for the right to the city, collecting concrete proposals.

It was also proposed to work from **records of capitalization of public policies** on each key-topic. They would be condensed documents designed to concretize the axes of the right to the city and, at the same

time, extract the impact of public policies developed by cities. The Technical Secretariat of the CSIPDHR could propose a guide for the capitalization of public policies. The proposals and the records could be approved at the next meeting of the CSIPDHR in Saint-Denis, on the occasion of the UCLG World Council in Paris.

Sylvia Tabitha Muzila, Mayor of Francistown in Botswana, poses the problem of the influx of people seeking new opportunities in the city and cannot find anywhere but peripheries to survive. It is important to think about how to work for the inclusion of these people, when often the local authorities and more established inhabitants believe newcomers should not be given rights. However, people who come every day to the city contribute and helps build it.

Arlette Cortes of Mexico City recalls that the federal government, through the Co-Chairmanship of Chief Minister Miguel Mancera Espinosa in this committee, is interested in working the contents of the right to the city. In this sense, Mexico City organized together with the Commission, the [International Seminar on Local Governments for the Right to the City](#), which was an important step towards the recognition of this right based on concrete practices of local governments. Mexico City could help developing the contents of the right to the city on topics such as: lesbian-gay population issues, urban planning and public space governance.

Finally, **Celestine Ketcha-Courtes**, Mayor of Bangangté in Cameroon, closed the meeting by thanking the Commission and the World Secretariat for taking this initiative and enabling the joint work with civil society, which is very important. She stressed the importance of further progress towards the right to the city and the city where there are rights for all.

After the meeting, the cities of Mexico, Bogota, Sao Paulo, the Brazilian Association of Municipalities, the Sule Foundation for Social Inclusion, and the coordinator of the Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights met with the Polis Institute and HIC, as coordinators of the Global Platform for the Right to the City to coordinate the thematic working groups. For more information about this work, please contact the Secretariat of the Committee: <mailto:m.fricaudet@uclg.org>