

INCLUSION POLICIES AS GLOBAL SOCIAL POLICY

1. **Local governments are fundamental players in a globalized world** in which much of the population is concentrated in cities and their metropolitan areas. This is a world of new and new diverse challenges and opportunities. However, the current situation of globalization accentuates inequalities; in fact, poverty and social inequality have increased on every continent since the last third of the twentieth century, causing social exclusion for many people.

2. **Social exclusion is the process by which certain individuals and groups are systematically denied access to basic rights of citizenship** (civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights). Exclusion, therefore, contains several dimensions: social, economic, political, cultural, relationship, digital, generational and gender-based. In different ways, it is also expressed as: poverty, precariousness in employment and educational deficits; disability, dependency and excessive responsibility for housework and housekeeping; discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation, religion, or ethnic origin; weakening of community relationships and breaking of emotional ties; citizenship which is fractured on ethno-cultural lines; insufficient provision of basic services; and loss of cultural expression.

3. From local political action it is possible to generate cohesive and democratic societies that ensure human rights. To make this happen, it is necessary to approach social exclusion from the perspective of its causes. For this, **policies for social inclusion must be at the centre of the political agenda of local governments in this century, along with the human, infrastructure and financial resources required for their development.** This is especially important for making the Millennium Development Goals a reality in our cities and, hence, the world.