

# *« THE RIGHT TO THE CITY IN THE HABITAT III SUMMIT AND UCLG CONGRESS (2016) »*

*Report of UCLG CSIPDHR events,  
initiatives and contributions*



**UCLG**  
**Committee**

Social Inclusion  
Participatory Democracy  
and Human Rights

# FOREWORD

In 2016, the UCLG Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights (CSIPDHR) took an active role in the UCLG World Congress of Bogota (12-15 October) and the UN Conference on Sustainable Urban Development and Housing – Habitat III in Quito (17-20 October). In both events the Committee, represented by many of its member local governments, along with civil society and UN partners, had the chance to promote the global agenda for the right to the city and strengthen the global movement of human rights cities.

On 12-15 October 2016, the city of Bogota (Colombia) hosted the 5th UCLG Congress – World Summit of Local and Regional Governments. The following week, 16-20 October, the United Nations Conference on Urban Development and Housing – Habitat III took place in Quito (Ecuador). In the Bogotá Congress, the Committee organized the permanent workshop “Co-Creating the City” – which gave voice to local governments, citizens and civil society – as well as the Policy Dialogue “The Right to the City at the heart of the New Urban Agenda” and the peer-learning session “Local Finances, Inclusive Governance and Participatory Budgeting”.

In Quito, the Committee took part in a wide agenda of activities, both as part of the official Conference and the alternative Forums, hand by hand with the Global Platform for the Right to the City. The CSIPDHR participation to the Habitat III summit gave a follow-up to more than one year of continuous engagement and concrete participation by member-local governments in the process of definition of the New Urban Agenda.

## ***A PLATFORM FOR CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION AT THE UCLG CONGRESS STRENGTHENING GLOBAL MUNICIPALISM FOR THE RIGHT TO THE CITY IN THE UCLG CONGRESS***

As part of the World Summit of Local and Regional Governments, the UCLG Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights was present in three main spaces, which included local and international institutions, academia and social movements:

### *Permanent platform “Co-creating the City”*

This workshop took place every morning of the Congress and was the main space for citizens, social movements and civil society organizations’ participation in the Summit. The platform also relied on the online live participation of activists from all over the world. The Platform “Co-Creating the city” allowed opening a space for a still rare dialogue between post-2011 mobilizations’ actors, such as Occupy Wall Street, the Spanish Indignados or self-managing artists’ collectives.

The platform was organized around six different sessions –each one focusing on one specific topic of the Right to the City, which participants had previously worked on through collaborative texts available online (and still editable): the right to the sustainable city, the right to the living city, the right to the learning city, the right to the democratic city, the right to the diverse city and the right to the fair city. The results of the workshop will be oriented to provide implementation guidelines for the right to the city and will be rooted in the practices and experiences presented in the workshop.



### *Policy Dialogue “Right to the City and the New Urban Agenda”*

On Friday 14 October, the Committee organized a Policy Dialogue which counted with the participation of Ada Colau (Mayor of Barcelona), Patrick Braouezec (President of Plaine Commune), Abdoulaye Thimbo (Mayor of Pikine), Jan Van Zanen (Mayor of Utrecht), Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas (Coordinator for International Affairs of Mexico City), Soo A Kim (Human Rights Director of Gwangju), Bahram Ghazi (Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights), Alison Brown (WIEGO, Global Platform for the Right to the City) and Pablo Benson (Occupy Wall Street activist). It was facilitated by Lorena Zárte (President of Habitat International Coalition) and Magali Fricaudet (CSIPDHR Executive Coordinator).

In the first part of the discussion, institutional representatives presented their views on the Right to the City and what its implementation in their cities means. Beyond the existing differences between contexts, which influence diverse challenges for the Right to the City in each territory, speakers agreed on the idea that guaranteeing human rights for all their inhabitants is an urgent need that should guide their orientations as Mayors.

Local government representatives shared the way they implement a human rights-based approach in all public policies -from fighting against discriminations to access to housing and energy. They also agreed in calling for a new relationship within metropolitan areas, one based in solidarity and redistribution instead of competitiveness, and in expressing the need for extending the global network of cities for Human Rights and the Right to the City.

From an international organizations’ perspective, Bahram Ghazi emphasized the need for developing effective mechanisms for human rights accountability regarding the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, including local governments as key stakeholders in such a monitoring task. Finally, Alison Brown, in line with Ada Colau’s statement, reaffirmed that the city as a commodity is unsustainable and that social and economic rights of all should be guaranteed.

## *Peer-learning session “Local Finances, Inclusive Governance and Participatory Budgeting”*

The UCLG CSIPDHR, along with the Committee on Local Finances for Development and the International Observatory of Participatory Democracy (IOPD), organized this peer-learning session. A specific methodology was used in order to promote the exchange of experiences, built on the case study of participatory budgeting of La Paz – which was presented by Roger Quiroa (Senior Advisor to the Mayor). The panel saw the participation of Dolors Sabater (Mayor of Badalona), Pedro Vicente Obando (Mayor of Pasto), Sally Ant-Lee (Mayor of Sorsogon), Sylvie Ducatteau (Councillor of Aubervilliers), Fernando Pindado (Barcelona Commissioner for Citizen Participation) and César Busatto (Secretary for Local Governance of Porto Alegre).



Previous to the discussion, Bachir Kanouté (ENDA-ECOPOP) introduced the session's basic question: How to include all city stakeholders, how to make citizens responsible for collective challenges? With a view to this, Giovanni Allegretti (University of Coimbra's Centre for Social Studies) facilitated the discussion, in which participants raised issues crucial for the design and implementation of inclusive and financially sustainable participatory budgeting: e-participation in municipal decision-making and the threat that the digital divide poses to social inclusion; the importance of national resources' decentralization to local governments to make sure that citizens have a real decision-making power through participatory budgeting, and the need for finding the right balance between technicians and social organizations' roles when setting up participatory budgets including feasible projects.

All participants agreed, though, in recognizing the essential role of citizen participation in municipal decision-making –not only in budgeting, but also in public policies- in order to construct build a sense of community able to renew the local social contract.

## *Work meeting on the Olympic Games legacy and social inclusion*

At the request of Seine-Saint-Denis and Plaine Commune, the Committee organized a working meeting with Olympic Games host cities, to provide evidence of big events' legacy in their territories in urban, economic and social terms. The meeting also included international organizations that have taken part in the debates held to organize these events.



The meeting was attended by Abdel Sadi, Vice-president for International Relations of the Departmental Council of Seine-Saint-Denis; Aurore Brachet, Directress of Via Le Monde (Seine-Saint-Denis Agency for global citizenship); Sylvie Ducatteau, councillor of Aubervilliers; Antonio Aniesa, Patrick Braouezec's adviser, responsible for metropolitan and international relations; Aline Abreu, Rio de Janeiro's director of international relations; Lorena Zárate, HIC's president, and Nelson Saule, from Polis Institute.

The meeting provided a space to share experiences and reflections on the Olympic Games' impacts on urban planning, economic development and the environment, as well as to critically address the issue of the Olympics' cultural, educational and sports legacy.



### *Other contributions and Congress highlights*

On the other hand, during the Bogota Congress, the UCLG World Council adopted a Declaration to Support the Peace Process in Colombia. The declaration calls for building a "society in peace and with social justice". It was promoted by civil society and UCLG Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights' member cities: Aubervilliers (France), Badalona (Spain), Barcelona (Spain), the Council of Seine-Saint-Denis (France), Mexico City, Diyarbakir (Turkey), the Catalan Fund for Cooperation and Development, the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces, Granollers (Spain), Madrid (Spain), Montevideo (Uruguay), Nanterre (France), Pikine (Senegal), Plaine Commune (France) and Terrassa (Spain).

The UCLG Congress in Bogota also enabled the Committee to update some relationships with member cities, as well as to extend the network by including new governments. The relationship with Bogota City Hall was also strengthened, through the Secretary for Woman. Indeed, it was explored the possibility to undertake a common work on women in Informal Sector during 2017. The Committee also strengthened relations with the city of Santa Ana (El Salvador) and the Global Forum of Social Economy led by the City of Seoul, who is exploring the possibility to create a working group on solidary economy within UCLG.

Finally, the UCLG World Council renewed the organization's statutory bodies. It is worth mentioning the election of Parks Tau, President of the South-African Local Governments Association as new President of UCLG and the election of a new collegiate Vice-Presidency, including the Mayor of Barcelona, Ada Colau, and the Mayor of Quito, Mauricio Rodas.

# ***LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND CIVIL SOCIETY ALLIANCE FOR THE RIGHT TO THE CITY IN THE HABITAT III SUMMIT***

Between 16 and 21 October, a Committee's delegation was in Quito to attend the United Nations Conference Habitat III and the alternative forums that were organized in parallel to the official summit. It was a noteworthy highlight to see that the Right to the City – which the Committee has been advocating for four years – was unanimously defended by Mayors gathering in the World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments, and therefore supporting the mention of such a right in the Habitat III Agenda – which was achieved in spite of being opposed by States like the US, Canada, Japan or EU members.

However, it was also important to recall, in all official and alternative events the Committee took part in along its partners from the Global Platform for the Right to the City (GPR2C), that the Right to the City is rooted in internationally recognized human rights, aiming at guaranteeing that cities and human settlements are common goods, not a commodity. The Committee didn't give up on insisting on the idea that the Right to the City is not the "obligation to the city" and that the only possible, sustainable urbanization needs to lay upon the urban-rural continuum. Finally, the Committee recalled that public finances –and especially local ones– and multilateral funds are key for a universal implementation of the Habitat III Agenda. It invited all stakeholders to set up a mechanism to monitor this agenda laying on the ground of territories and involving inhabitants.

As part of the alternative forum organized by CITE-FLACSO **"Urban Alternatives and Subjects of Transformation"**, the Committee participated in the panel held on 16 October in the morning. Under the theme "Local and global subjects of transformation", the panellists (Magali Fricaudet, coordinator of the Committee; Nelson Saule, GPR2C; Carlos Macías, spokesperson for the Spanish Platform of People Affected by Mortgages; Andrea Encalada, community leader in Quito, and Ramiro Rivadeneira, Ecuador's Ombudsman) agreed on the need for building territories for the common good, which involves re-thinking democratic mechanisms and renewing local social contracts. This means the re-configuration of institutions' role in society and putting its obligation to guarantee inhabitant's rights at the heart of public action: "political commitment is proofed through public resources", Encalada said.

In order to build this new social contract, all city stakeholders are needed, and that's precisely what the Global Platform for the Right to the City does – it goes beyond classical urban movements by gathering local governments, experts, researchers and local and transnational civil society to promote and broaden the agenda for the Right to the City. For its part, Fricaudet emphasized the alliances needed to make change happen, by insisting on the necessary coordination between local governments, social movements, trade unions –especially those of public workers–, researchers, solidary-sector and local companies, States and UN human rights bodies. Finally, Macías recalled the social function of habitat as opposite to the competitive city model, built upon private property's concentration and accumulation processes.

The **Second World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments** took place



on 16 October too, the day before the Habitat III Conference's official opening. There were recurrent references to the Right to the City as a set of practices and rights that must guide the implementation of the New Urban Agenda; speeches by Patrick Braouezec (Plaine Commune), Ada Colau (Barcelona), Bipin Kumar Rai (Delhi), Manuela Carmena (Madrid), Miguel Ángel Mancera (Mexico City) and Daniel Martínez (Montevideo) were especially remarkable.

They addressed the diverse dimensions of the Right to the City: from gender equality to advocating for new models of local democracy in which citizens are meaningfully included, to the promotion of an economic relocation for common good. There were also calls for setting up sound social and accessible housing public policies to guarantee human rights, and also for urgently fighting corruption –that harms the social contract and diminishes available resources for the Right to the City's implementation. Finally, direct access for local governments to global funds was also raised in the Assembly.



On 18 October, Patrick Braouezec, Co-President of the Committee, took part in the **Session on Municipal Finances** organized by the UCLG Committee on Local Finances for Development, along with representatives of the OCDE, the Brookings Institution, the Lincoln Institute for Land Policy and the city of Dakar (represented by its financial programme directress). During the session, Braouezec recalled the key role of local and regional governments in guaranteeing their inhabitants' rights and welfare, and called for development a "new redistribution of wealth that enables governments to meet inhabitants' needs". He stated that this is a metropolitan challenge.

Khady Dia Sarr, the city's Director of the municipal finances programme, identified two main challenges for the city: the lack of a good land register –which makes much more difficult taxes' collection- and the impossibility to access to international public funds –thus, needing access to private banks' loans, which are far more expensive. In this regard, Braouezec closed the panel alerting against the financialization of cities and loans' high interests rates, which eventually become obligation of debt servicing. "The local and regional governments need fair, sound tax systems to avoid the financialization of our territories", he stated.

The **Urban Dialogue on the Right to the City** took place on 18 October as an official thematic session of the Conference. The speakers addressed the Right to the City's main dimensions throughout discussions held in two continuous panels.

The first one consisted of GPR2C members (Augusto Barrera, Alison Brown, Ana Falu, Nelson Saule), as well as Rosario Robles, Mexico Secretary of Urban Development and Housing and Right to the City's main advocate all along the Habitat III process. The second panel included participants from different backgrounds, including representatives of local governments (Patrick Braouezec, President of Plaine Commune, and Felipe de Jesús Gutiérrez, Mexico City's Secretary of Urban Development and Housing), the Latin-American Development Bank (José Carreras), the Canadian Government and the activism for the right to housing and social housing.

They all addressed many messages to a large and diverse audience: the need for strengthening local capacities to make the Right to the City real; the challenge of continuing broadening and articulating the global movement for the Right to the City in order to generate critical mass, and the importance of the gender approach –the way women live and perceive the city is still very different from the way men do. Other dimensions addressed were city informal workers (who make a huge contribution to local and global economies, whereas they suffer a great deprivation of rights) and the need for strong social housing policies to guarantee accessible housing for all as a basic Human Right. Finally, Patrick Braouezec identified the building of solidary metropolitan areas as the main challenge of the upcoming urban future.

On the same day's afternoon, the CSIPDHR, along with the Haiti Inter-ministerial Committee for Territorial Planning and the French Agency for Development (AFD), organized a **Networking Event on Land Rights and Social Inclusion**. The session saw the participation of many attendants in order to exchange on land and housing issues in this roundtable facilitated by the sociologist Agnès Deboulet, researcher at La Vue Lab: Boubacar Bah, Mayor of Bamako's 5th District and President of the Malian Association of Municipalities; Shivani Chaudry, from the Housing and Land Rights Network of Delhi ; Agnès Deboulet, researcher and co-chair of La Vue Research Centre (Paris VIII University); Felipe de Jesús Gutiérrez, Mexico City Secretary of Urban Development and Housing; Bipin Kumar Rai, expert at the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board, and Rosemay Guignard, from the Haiti Inter-ministerial Committee. The debate was chaired by Patrick Braouezec and Gautier Mignot (French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation).

Each panellist presented the security of tenure's situation in their territories, following two main questions: What are the persistent factors that give rise to insecurity of tenure? What kind of insecurity does take place, in terms of capacity to remain in a given habitat and to avoid eviction risk? They were also asked to identify the key messages to implement the New Urban Agenda in order to guarantee the security of tenure.

Building on participants' contributions, it was possible to identify some conclusions. Firstly, it was found that the insecurity of tenure is a wide and plural phenomenon that affects both the peripheral neighbourhoods and city centres. It means a status of permanent expulsion risk for those suffering it. Regarding the State and public administrations, an important factor that generates insecurity was found: the abusive use of expropriation. This raised the issue of the opposition between human rights and the right to property. It was also found that in many countries –especially in those where tenure systems were inherited from colonial administrations–, alternatives to ownership need to be promoted, as securisation of property rights' costs are very high, actually becoming another exclusion factor. Finally, everyone agreed to defend and apply the principle of "no expulsion without relocation" as critical element to fight insecurity of tenure's consequences.

On 19 October, the Committee was invited to join the **Convergence Assembly on the Right to the City**, along with inhabitants' associations from all over the world that came to give



evidence of the violations of the right to housing. Together, we evaluated the overall Habitat III process. The Committee emphasized the need for getting united to defend cities as common good in front of the extreme privatization – a trend also represented in the Official Conference.



On 20 October in the morning, the Committee took part in **“The Shift” launching event**, co-organized with the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Housing, Leilani Farha, and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. The goal of the event was to value the possibilities to create a global network to promote the application of the right to housing as fundamental human right. It was crowded with inhabitants and civil society organizations, working and mobilized for the right to housing in different parts of the world. Through a participatory methodology, the Special Rapporteur advocated for the creation of “a tool enabling to share and work in a collaborative way, that would show to the world the power of the global movement for the right to housing” and to radically shift the paradigm of housing as a commodity.

The event was joined by participants from all over the world and representatives of human rights and the right to housing advocacy organizations (FEANTSA and HIC, among others), and was supported by local governments – namely Diyarbakir, Plaine Commune, Badalona, Barcelona, Madrid, Montevideo, Mexico City and Delhi. They all agreed on calling for committing public resources to make sure the realization of housing as a basic right.

In the afternoon, the Committee attended the session organized by Bachir Kanouté (ENDA-ECOPOP) on **Participatory Planning and the Right to the City**, along with Nelson Dias (In Loco Association, Portugal), Felipe de Paula (Sao Paulo’s Secretary for Human Rights), Serge Allioune (Cities Alliance), Jean-Pierre Elong Mbassi (UCLG-A Secretary-General) and Alioune Badiane (African Cities Think Tank). The discussion focused on the need for strengthening local governments’ resources to democratically manage urbanization, which is exponentially growing in African cities.

Furthermore, the Committee attended other events and sessions, organized as part of Habitat III and the alternative forums. Among those of the official conference, we participated in the networking event **“The Right to the City in Barcelona and the World: Public Space at the Heart of a New Model of Urban Sustainability”**. In this session, the Barcelona (Spain) and Medellin (Colombia) councillors in charge of urbanism presented their proposals to guarantee the right to a liveable and sustainable city through policies aiming at

integrating the socially-produced city in the urban fabric, at building a quality, democratic public space, and at promoting alternative tenure systems to realize the right to housing.

Additionally, at the request of Quito City hall, the CSIPDHR coordination team met César Mantilla, Quito's Secretary of Social Inclusion, and his advisers, in order to explore the possibility to set up a monitoring programme of the Quito's City Hall social inclusion policies with a view to the rights included in the World Charter-Agenda for Human Rights in the City.

Finally, a **Coordination Meeting of the Global Platform for the Right to the City** gathered over 60 members from all over the world to assess the Platform's collective process until Habitat (an important stage) and discuss the organization's future strategy –with the support of Ford Foundation, which renewed its financial support to the Platform for next years.

To conclude, it must be highlighted that the Congress in Bogota and the Habitat III Conference marked a new stage in the process of advocating for the Right to the City, as both local governments and the Habitat III Agenda adopted by the States mention the Right to the City – which has been defended by the CSIPDHR since 2012. This recognition results from the alliance between the local governments advocating for the Right to the City within UCLG, civil society organizations and researcher centres (FALCSO, DPU-UCL, La Vue, Coimbra' Centre for Social Studies), especially with partners like Habitat International Coalition and Polis Institute – the Committee has been working with them for ten years, and we are now jointly involved in the Global Platform for the Right to the City.

However, new challenges are emerging in this new stage in order for the Right to the City not to be watered down:

- **To make sure that the Right to the City does not become the “obligation to the city”** – a real risk in a mostly urban world in which national and international migration to cities are usually non- chosen decisions to do what seems to be the only alternative to the abandonment of rural development policies, land grabbing and climate change's consequences.

- **To lay the legal foundations for the Right to the City, so that this concept does not remain just a vision**, but a legal body rooted in human rights which is fully recognized by international treaties.

- **To guarantee the necessary public funds and resources both at local and global levels**, so that cities are common goods –in front of the current privatization trends and the Smart City model.

- **To set up a monitoring programme for the New Urban Agenda**, based on the local level and rooted in Right to the City's indicators.

- **To strengthen the social foundation and mobilization around the Right to the City**, and to broaden the global movement advocating for it.