



International Seminar on the eradication of poverty right through the right to the city

Introduction: The role and commitment of local governments for fair, supportive, democratic and sustainable cities.

At the end of 2015, we will have exceeded the Millennium Development Goals' (MDG) achievement deadline –which were aimed to eradicate poverty. Meanwhile, the global population development expectations were reviewed and redefined by the States in the new [Sustainable Growth Objectives](#) (SGO), which were adopted by the United Nations General Assembly last September. In this context, the role of local governments seems to be more important than ever in order to guarantee effective transformations that improve citizens' quality of life. .

In a world where more than half of the global population is located in cities and metropolises, multidimensional poverty grows in a way that generate systemic processes of inequality and social exclusion. This means that certain groups and individuals are systematically blocked from access to basic citizen rights (civil, political, economic, social, cultural and environmental rights). Exclusion, then, includes many dimensions: social, economic, political, cultural, relational, digital, generational, and gendered exclusions.

Although the poverty reduction figures reached in the last decade, Latin America continues to show points of extreme concern. According to the “World Bank and the Center for Distributive, Labor and Social Studies” (CEDLAS), Latin America is the world's second most unequal region (52.9 Gini coefficient), just slightly below Sub-Saharan Africa (56.5), and rather far back from Asia (44.7) as well as Eastern Europe and Central Asia (34.7). On the other hand, the recently published *Social Panorama of Latin America 2014* from the United Nations Economic Committee for Latin American Countries (ECLAC) has recorded a stagnation in poverty's decline: the percentage of people whose income is below the Poverty Line was 28.1 in 2013, as it was in 2012, and a drop of just 10% is forecasted for 2014¹.

¹ Poverty and inequality in Latin America (1980-2014)



In the light of this situation, it is possible through local political action to **contribute to social progress, and to generate fair and democratic societies, which ensure rights' exercise for all and the guarantee to the right to the city** so that cities become common goods with shared benefits for all their inhabitants and users.

Therefore, in order to meet SGOs in our cities and metropolitan areas, and thus in the world in which we live, effective decentralization is necessary –with competences and resources generating a distribution of wealth. Therefore, **social inclusion local policies should be at the center of this century's political agendas, together with human, infrastructural, and financial resources required for its development.**

As acknowledge by the recent [report from the United Nations Human Rights Council Advisory Committee on the Role of Local Governments in Promoting and Protecting Human Rights](#), local governments are determinant actors in the fight against inequality through their essential role in promoting, protecting, and implementing human rights. Indeed, as they are the highest level of administration in touch with citizens, and in many cases provide basic public services, Local Governments are best positioned to meet daily needs of citizens. In addition, they are important actors in human rights' implementation, especially in terms of education, housing, health, water, nutrition, environment, and safety. Furthermore, local governments play an essential role in preventing and acting in response to discrimination against minorities, vulnerable groups and migrants.

However, beyond this role as actors in guaranteeing human rights, local governments, together with citizens, are also capable of implementing **the Right to the City** in order to build fair, democratic, and sustainable cities within the framework of effective decentralization and individuals' participation. Implementing the right to the city means guaranteeing the **equal use of cities as a common good, within the framework of principles of sustainability, democracy, and social justice.** The right to the city is interdependent to other civil, political, economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights which are defined by treaties. In order for this right to become a reality in world's cities and metropolises, it is recognized the need for **local governments to be able to adopt concrete public policies, but also for the international community to recognize the**

<http://blogs.elpais.com/contrapuntos/2015/03/pobreza-y-desigualdad-en-america-latina-1980-2014.html>, by Gerardo Caetano, professor at the Universidad de la República, Uruguay / Gustavo de Armas, social policy specialist from UNICEF, Uruguay Office



role of cities in safeguarding human rights and the right to the city, and recognizing the UCLG as a privileged interlocutor for all that relating to urban questions.

Therefore, since 2000 a **local governments movement for the right to the city has been created**, around [UCLG Committee on Human Rights, Social Inclusion and Participative Democracy](#) (CSIPDHR), in which the city of Bogotá actively participates. This movement expressed itself on the occasion of the [World Meeting of Local Governments for the Right to the City](#) (Plaine Commune, December 2012) and the [International Seminar of Local Governments for the Right to the City](#) (Mexico, April 2015). It has also been consolidated since 2011 in the [Kwangju World Forum on Cities for Human Rights](#). The declarations of [Saint-Denis](#) and [Mexico](#), as well as the [Kwangju Governing Principles of Cities for Human Rights](#), are important contributions to the international Habitat agenda (Quito, 2016) towards fairer, more inclusive, democratic, and sustainable cities.

Since 2005, CSIPDHR member local governments have promoted their own political reflections regarding local policies on social inclusion, participative democracy, human rights and the right to the city through different kind of activities: political advocacy, experiences' exchange, knowledge production and networking. The Committee also coordinated [UCLG World Charter Agenda for Human Rights in the City writing-process](#) (2011), and today promotes its adoption by local governments.

Bogotá Humana hosts a seminar to share concrete policies to implement the right to the city

Fully aligned with the right to the city's principles, the city of Bogotá, through the "Bogotá Humana" Development Plan, the city of Bogotá has carried out actions to face all kinds of segregation, generate clean environmental practices to fight against climate change, and strengthen public management capacities, not just in quality, but also with transparency and responsibility with city's heritage –in order to meet Bogotá citizens' needs for a dignified life.

This has implied a great reduction of poverty, an improvement of citizens' quality of life, and the fulfillment of their rights. Bogotá moved from a multidimensional poverty index of 12.1% in 2010, to 5.4% in 2014, which means 465,795 people emerged from poverty.



The Bogotá Humana Social Integration Secretary's public policies were good examples of how the [UCLG World Charter Agenda for Human Rights in the City](#) principles can be concretely implemented by cities.

Therefore, in order to share its experience and promote the right to the city, Bogotá is actively participating in UCLG Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights. Within this framework, Bogotá Humana convenes this seminar.

Objectives: To consolidate the global movement of local governments for the right to the city and facilitate the exchange of public policies to implement it

The International Seminar "Implementing the Right to the City to Eradicate Poverty" is intended to be a space for discussion in which an exchange of experiences takes place between local government representatives, members of international networks and experts in human rights, and in which is reaffirmed the need for local governments to adopt public policies aimed to the " building inclusive, livable, fair, democratic, sustainable, and enjoyable cities,... and contribute to the creation of an equitable, inclusive and solidarity-based urban economy that guarantees productive insertion and the economic strengthening of popular classes." (Mexico City charter for the right to the city) and that also guarantee a significant reduction of poverty.

This seminar is in line with the International Seminar of Local Governments for the Right to the City held in Mexico, and it is within the framework of the work carried out along with UCLG Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights.

The seminar is intended to answer to some of the questions raised below:

- From their public policies, how can local governments contribute locally to the eradication of poverty, guaranteeing the right to the city, and thereby great social, economic and structural difficulties they face to fully exercise these rights?
- What local and municipal policies can be used to implement the right to the city?
- What actions must be taken by Latin American and world cities in order to keep advancing on poverty and inequality overcoming with regard to the SGOs?



- What are the actions and strategies to guarantee the right to the city for 2050 cities, in which 70% of the world population will be concentrated?

Main topics to be addressed

- Poverty's eradication through a human rights approach
- Local actions to achieve human rights and the right to the city.
- Inequality and poverty in the post-2015 development agenda.

Parallel Events

Friday, November 20th, 1pm

Official launch of the City of Bogotá's Street Dwellers policy

On the occasion of this seminar, City of Bogotá's Street Dwellers policy will be officially launched. This policy seeks to face the growing phenomenon of street dwellers through an approach on rights and differentials, in order to meet the basic needs of street dwellers with dignity.

Therefore, on the afternoon of November 20th, the official launch of this policy will be honored by the attendance of international experts on the subject.

Launch of UCLG City of Bogotá Peace Prize

Thursday, November 19th, 5pm

The UCLG Committee on Development Cooperation and City Diplomacy will launch its Peace Prize.



The role cities and municipalities play in the prevention of conflict and the creation of peace is ever-more consolidated, given that policy and strategy design focused on their regions and citizens are of their responsibilities, allowing UCLG City of Bogotá Peace Prize has the goal to generate more recognition for local initiatives that promote dialogue and peace. The idea of the prize arose from the First Global Conference on Cities Diplomacy in The Hague (The Netherlands) in 2008. Developed within the framework of the global organization United Local Cities and Governments (UCLG), this conference highlighted the importance of creating a peace prize. The City of Bogotá, that hosts UCLG World Congress



in 2016, promotes and is the see of this prize as part of its efforts to contribute to peace-building, democracy and full compliance of human rights.

Attendants

The following representations have been invited:

International Organizations

United Nations - Human Rights Council

ECLAC

CEJIL

City Networks

UCLG Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights

UCLG Committee on Development Cooperation and City Diplomacy

Invited Local Governments

Montevideo (Uruguay), Sao Pablo (Brazil), Curitiba (Brazil), Madrid / Barcelona (Spain), Nantes / Saint Denis (France), Bandung (Indonesia), Toronto (Canada), Lisbon (Portugal), Utrecht (The Netherlands), Kwangju / Seoul (Republic of Korea), Mexico City (Mexico), Francistown (Botswana), Vienna (Austria), Ethiopia.

Academia

University of Coimbra, Center for Social Studies (CES)

Latin American Faculty of Social Science (FLASCO)

Civil Society

- Operational Center for Housing and Populations, AC (COPEVI) - Mexico
- ATD Four - World
- Global Platform for the Right to the City
- INFID - International NGO Forum On Indonesian Development- INFID
- The Danish Institute for Human Rights



Organizers

The seminar will be organized by the Secretary's Office of Integration and District Direction for International Relations of Bogotá, city of Bogotá, in collaboration with UCLG CSIPDHR.

UCLG Committee on Development Cooperation and City Diplomacy, which is responsible for organizing the Peace Price, is also participating in the organization of this event.

With the participation of the [Global Platform for the Right to the City](#).



Global Platform for the Right to the City
Plataforma Global por el Derecho a la Ciudad
Plataforma Global pelo Direito à Cidade