



**International seminar
of local governments for the
Right to the City**

Ciudad de México. 20, 21 y 22 de abril 2015

“The Right to the City: From local implementation to global claim”

Presentation

The Right to the City, a necessity in a mostly urban world

In 2050, seventy percent of the world population will live in cities. In thirty years more than 2 billions of people will move to cities, especially to the biggest metropolitan ones. In a world where only 1% of its population owns more than half of the wealth, urban areas are the focus of unsustainable disparities.

Thus, this urban reality tackles crucial questions for the future of the majority of the world population: How to build cities for everyone without excluding millions of the poorest people in social and spatial borders? How to build cities to be spaces for good living, providing opportunities to all the inhabitants? What measures could allow local governments to guarantee rights to education, healthcare, healthy environment, employment, participation, culture, security, among others? How to guarantee access to public services and to improve urban mobility? How to promote intercultural and intergenerational cities without discrimination, where different worlds can participate?

Local governments members of the Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights (part of the world’s cities organization – UCLG), are engaged since 2004 to promote inclusive, democratic and sustainable cities where rights are guaranteed for



everyone. Mexico City is one of the very active members of this process. Aware of the current phase of intense urbanization, these local governments share the will to propose right to the city as a possible alternative to the present narrative of urban development based on a neo-liberal approach, which do not respond the current challenge to make cities places of good living.

The Right to the City is a collective right for all inhabitants. Cities and their surroundings are considered as spaces for the implementation and fulfilment of rights, in order to share the benefits and to ensure a fair, universal, democratic and sustainable redistribution of resources, wealth, services, common goods and opportunities. Some local governments have included rules, principles and tools in their legal frameworks and are developing public policies so that the right to the city becomes a reality.

Cities for the rights

Local Governments movement for human rights began in 2000, with the adoption of [European Charter for the Safeguarding of Human Rights in the City](#) (Saint-Denis, 2000). The Charter is the result of the groundwork initiated in Barcelona in 1998 during the “Cities for Human rights” Conference. The Conference was organized to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Hundreds of mayors and political representatives from several European cities participated and united their voices to claim for a greater political recognition as key actors in the safeguarding of human rights in an increasingly urbanized world.

In 2010, the Mexico City Government adopted the **Mexico City Charter for the Right to the City**, which was elaborated through a participative dialogue with citizens. This Charter aims at “contributing to the building of inclusive, habitable, fair, democratic, sustainable and enjoyable city; to impulse social organization processes, strengthening social cohesion, and building active and responsible citizenship; to build a fair, inclusive and solidarity-based urban economy capable to guarantee productive inclusion, and to enhance popular economic sectors.”

In 2011, Local governments of UCLG adopted the [Global Charter-Agenda for Human Rights in the City](#). The Global Charter has a broader scope than the European Charter because it is addressed to the whole world. It also includes concrete action plans for Local governments to guarantee these rights. Furthermore, other municipal charters were adopted in Montreal (Canada) and Gwangju (South Korea), for instance.

In one and a half year, UN-Habitat Summit on Housing and Sustainable Development (Habitat III Summit, Quito, 2016) will define a New Global Urban Agenda with the participation of States of the entire world. In this context Mexico City and the Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights of UCLG, in collaboration with civil society and academic sector, want to present an alternative to the current urban narrative model. To reach that goal, the Seminar will discuss with the ways to implement the Right to the City as a politic and legal tool to build “another possible urban world”.

The **International seminar of local governments for the Right to the City** is a broad invitation to establish dialogue between cities, including civil society, on how to implement the Right to the City in their territories. From this point of view, the event is conceived as an open exchanging space for local governments, civil society and academic sector.



Organizers: Mexico City Government and the Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights of UCLG

Mexico City Government, through its Foreign Affairs Office and the Secretariat of Social Development.

[The Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights](#) contributes to articulate a common voice for cities in UCLG on social inclusion, participatory democracy and human rights. It advises local governments on the design of these policies and promotes political debate, experiences exchange and mutual learning between cities around the world.

[UCLG](#) is a global platform that represents and defends the interests of local governments worldwide and contributes to more political weight for the cities in the global governance.

Background

In 2012, the Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights, and the Urban Community of Plaine Commune (France) organized the **1st World Summit of Local Governments for the Right to the City**. This event has been a worldwide platform of experiences exchange among local government representatives, members of social movements' international networks, and human rights experts. The Summit was attended by around 200 participants and a total of 40 speakers from 16 countries: Austria, Belgium, Bosnia Herzegovina, Brazil, Burundi, Canada, France, Mexico, Portugal, Senegal, Slovenia, Spain, South Korea, Switzerland, The Netherlands, and the United States of America.

The 1st World Summit of Local Governments for the Right to the City ended with the reading, adoption and a final statement expressing the participants' will to keep working to make the Right to the City become a reality in their cities and metropolises. In order to achieve this goal, it was agreed that it is fundamental that local authorities adopt certain public policies. Furthermore, the necessity for the international community to recognize the role cities play in safeguarding human rights and Right to the City, and to have UCLG considered as a privileged interlocutor regarding urban issues, was also highlighted.

In 2014, the Committee co-organized, with Gwangju Metropolitan City, the Gwangju International Center and the Korea Human Rights Foundation, the 4th World Human Rights Cities Forum. The Forum gathered more than 500 participants from 25 different countries, mainly representatives from "human rights cities", human rights NGOs, grassroots organizations, local parliamentarians, academics, as well as UN human rights experts. During the meeting, Mexico City expressed its will to organize an International Seminar of Local Governments for the Right to the City.

The Seminar that will be held in Mexico is part of the process of promotion and local implementation of the Right to the City. It follows the will of the Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights to establish a worldwide network for the Right to the City in the framework of the Global Platform for the right to the city created in November 2014 by initiative of the transnational civil society.



The working days are organized in two main plenary sessions that will deal with the **Right to the City in a local level and in the New Global agenda**, and five thematic forums organized in working groups:

Main broached topics:

- ❖ **Human Rights and Pacific Coexistence**
- ❖ **Right to the City and Local Democracy**
- ❖ **Inclusive Planning, environment public space**
- ❖ **Right to the City and New urban citizenship**

We will have presence of the following speakers:

Asia

- City of Gwangju (South Korea)
- City of Chandigarh (India) – To be confirmed

America

- City of Bogota (Colombia)
- City of Guarulhos (Brazil)
- City of Morón (Argentina)
- City of Sao Paulo (Brasil)

Middel East

- City of Al Aizaria (Palestina)

Europe

- Urban Community of Plaine Commune (Periphery of Paris)
- City of Lisboa (Portugal)
- City of Nanterre (France)

Africa

- City of Pikine (Senegal)
- City of Durban (South Africa) – To be confirmed

Cities Networks

- Peripheral Local Governments Forum (FALP)
- Gwangju Human Rights Cities Forum

Civil Society

- Polis Institute (Brazil)
- Global Platform for the Right to the City
- Operational Center for Housing and Settlement (COPEVI) - Mexico
- International Housing Coalition (HIC)



Academic Sector

- Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (PUEC-UNAM): Universitarian Program on Urban Studies (PUEC), Social Research Institute and Political and Social Sciences Department (IIS-UNAM)
- Marie- Hélène Bacqué, French National Center for Urban Research
- Giovani Allegretti, Center of Social Studies of Coimbra University (Portugal)

International Organizations

- UN -Habitat – To be confirmed
- International Labour Organization – To be confirmed

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