secrétariat international permanent
droits de l'homme et gouvernements locaux
nantes, pays de la loire. france

Commission Inclusion Sociale
et Démocratie Participative CGLU

UCLG-CISDP/SPIDH/ODP ROUND TABLE
In partnership with the town of Nantes and the Pays de la Loire region

GLOBAL CHARTER-AGENDA FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE CITY

Wednesday 30th June 2010, 2pm- 4.30pm, in room BC
Languages: English, French, Spanish

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1. Presentation of the session

This activity was jointly organised by the Committee on Social Inclusion and Participative Democracy (CISDP) of the international organisation United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and the International Permanent Secretariat for Human Rights and Local Government, Nantes, Pays de la Loire (SPIDH)[1], with the support of the Observatory of Public Decision.

The CISCP has worked in the field of social inclusion, participative democracy, and human rights since 2005. In particular, it is involved in integrating human rights into local policies by working with local governments around the world. The CISDP is thus responsible for promoting two tools, namely: the **Global Charter-Agenda for Human Rights in the City** (which remains in the planning stage) and the European Charter for Human Rights in the City.

The two Charters stem from:
1) the desire of a number of local authorities to be formally committed to protecting human rights
2) the belief that local authorities, as the closest level of government and governance to the people, are key actors in promoting and defending human rights, and can contribute to guaranteeing their operational implementation in daily life.

The Round Table dedicated to the "Global Charter-Agenda for Human Rights in the City"[2] aimed to:

- examine the origins and progress of the project (content and process of ratification within local government networks);
- generate discussion between politicians, NGOs and other actors in the city on the rights in question and the initial avenues for action;
- jointly elicit suggestions so that local government engagement becomes the subject of close collaboration with other actors in their area, organised on the basis of democratic principles;
- collectively imagine the ways in which the Charter can be promoted, so that it is further discussed before being validated by the local government networks at the end of 2010.

[1] In 2007 SPIDH was nominated to lead the working group on Human Rights and Local Government of the Committee on Social Inclusion and Participative Democracy (CISDP) of the UCLG. In this role, the SPIDH, which also organises the World Forum on Human Rights, is supported by the Nantes Metropole, the Pays de la Loire region, the Loire-Atlantique department and the town of Nantes, as local authorities sitting on the governing body.
[2] Agenda: in the literal sense "that which has to be done".

2. Speakers

- **Moderator: Hélène COMBE**, general representative of the Observatory of Public Decision (Nantes)
- **Jaume SAURA**, director of the Institute for Human Rights in Catalonia, co-ordinator of the experts who developed the draft Charter.
- **Philippe DRAIZE**, deputy local government Secretary for Human Relations, for the Fort, international relations and decentralised co-operation for the town of Huy (Belgium), representing the "diversity" section of the UNDP World Alliance of Cities Against Poverty.
- **Barbara LA BARBERA**, local councillor for Aubagne, responsible for human rights in the city, anti-discrimination and international solidarity.
- **Pierre-Henri COFFI**, President of the African Network for Professional Training
- **Philippe HENSMANS**, Director of the French-speaking Belgian section of Amnesty International.
- **Monique RABIN**, Vice-President of the Pays de la Loire Regional Council, President of the "European and International Strategy and Inter-regional Co-operation" Commission.

3. Analytical elements

The discussion between the participants was developed partly by representatives from international civil society and partly by representatives of regional groups. The discussion brought to light the following elements:

Principles for implementing the Charter on the local level

Three elements are required for the Charter to be applied: it has to be made **visible**, it must allow for **sharing of experience** and it must be **applied in a cross-cutting way**. The participants also felt that the text was, above all, a compromise which could be perfected, which was universally relevant and which now needs to move into practice. The Charter sets out once more the rights by translating them onto the local level, rendering them closer to citizens. The Charter's originality stems from the emphasis it gives to action plans suggested after each article. No local government could implement all the rights, but **priorities for action could be set with an obligation to report based on performance indicators.**

How can this Charter become binding? A number of local governments would like to put the Charter into practice, but the scope for manoeuvre in terms of state power is often limited. There is a need therefore for **civil society to assist in putting pressure on the local governments**. Similarly, the question of implementing the Charter in a context where decentralisation has not occurred or where towns do not have real autonomy was also raised. The **question of resources** in developing countries was also brought up as a recurring problem. There is thus a need for **joint responsibility for implementing rights** and commitments must be shared between civil society and local authorities.

All existing texts should be identified, Agenda 21/22, the European Charter etc, in order to define **cross-cutting** terms, so that all branches of local government are involved in a **sustainable** way. The most important factor is that politicians accept their role and **their responsibilities.** It is therefore necessary to **train citizens – politicians and lay people –** and to teach them about the rights set out in the Charter. Finally, citizens must **reclaim their towns and regions and take ownership of the Charter** so that action is relevant, through the implementation of the mechanisms of participative democracy.

Implementing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms on the local and international levels

The concept of joint responsibility between civil society, citizens and town users led to questions about establishing a **citizen's monitoring group** - an independent organisation which would create an annual report aimed at citizens. Similarly on the international level, **a peer monitoring group**, could be organised within the international network.

Promoting the Charter on the global level

The **International Network of Towns and Regions Signatory to the Charter** could meet regularly to evaluate the international implementation and promotion of the Charter.

To promote awareness of the Charter – Amnesty International will thus organise a **seminar on the 10th of December 2010, following adoption of the Charter at the World Congress of the UCLG** to present good practice identified on the basis of implementing the Charter.