

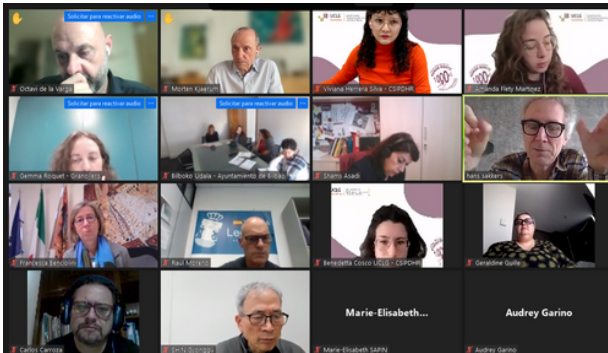
Annual report 2024



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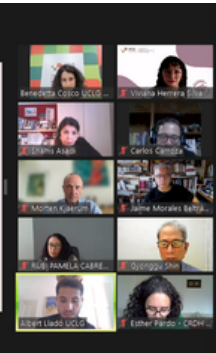
J. Enhancing the role of regional and local governments

51. Local and regional governments play a critical role in addressing the criminalization of homelessness and poverty. Several States have decriminalized vagrancy-related offences and/or begging at the national level, or adopted national homelessness or housing policies that recognise the need to ensure fundamental human rights protections, however at local or regional level many by-laws, ordinances or regulations continue to criminalize life-sustaining activities.⁵⁶
52. Local governments are at the frontline of balancing the interests of various constituents in terms of how, when and by whom public spaces are accessed and utilized, while also seeking to ensure public order, safety and urban development. Local governments need to develop strategies that strike a balance between the fair and inclusive use of public spaces and broader environmental, safety and economic objectives. This can be addressed in part through the adoption of zoning laws, local ordinances and by-laws which determine the type of activities that are permitted in public spaces, although such regulations should not lead to the prohibition of the life-sustaining activities discussed throughout this study.
53. Local governments acknowledge that the provision of affordable housing must be prioritised, and that comprehensive approaches to combating homelessness should encompass prevention, emergency responses, structural solutions, and legal reform. Policies must move away from punitive approaches to the management of public spaces, towards measures that focus on non-discrimination, equality and safety.⁵⁷



Key UCLG events & processes

- UCLG Policy Councils
- UN Summit of the Future & roadmap towards the World Social Summit
- Other



Thoughts on the day
Amanda Fietz
Coordinator UCLG Global Charter-Agenda

The Charter of Values

- Conclusion of the programme
- Legacy for the future
- Shared values and engagement towards "Caring Territories for Women Victims of Violence"





2024 Introduction: 2024 in summary

2024 was an important year for continuing to consolidate the role of the Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG-CSIPDHR) as **an international platform to advance the global movement of Human Rights Cities and, more generally, the recognition of the key role of local and regional governments (LRGs) in implementing this universal framework for everyone**. Evidence of this is the recognition of the key role of LRGS in the joint report by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing, released in September 2024.

Moreover, during 2024, **the Committee's work within the thematic area of human rights became a fundamental component of the Local Social Covenant**, a process launched by UCLG at the U20 (Rio de Janeiro), aimed at strengthening the contribution of LRGs to the Second UN World Summit for Social Development, to be held in Qatar in November 2025. The Coalition is consolidating as a transformative political platform designed to promote social justice, equality, and sustainable urban development through local action.

In this regard, **the Committee's global campaign "10, 100, 1,000 Human Rights Cities and Territories by 2030" was strengthened with the launch of its third wave to increase the membership of new members and consolidate the participation of existing ones**. Under the slogan "Pioneering Local Public Policies to Uphold Dignity for All," this edition placed special emphasis on highlighting the new generation of public policies being promoted by LRGs to make human rights a reality for all. This year was particularly important for the campaign, as it was recognized by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in its "Summary of the expert meeting on enhancing capacity-building for local governments to incorporate human rights into all their work."

This core process was accompanied by the **start of the second phase of updating UCLG's Charter-Agenda on Human Rights in the City**, which consists of defining the rights included in the updated structure resulting from the first phase. This second phase will continue throughout 2025 to finalize the definition of the new generation of human rights being promoted by LRGs.

Key milestones for this agenda included the **World Human Rights Cities Forum 2025, co-organized by the Metropolitan City of Gwangju, and the 23rd Conference of the International Observatory on Participatory Democracy (OIDP)**, organized by the Municipality of Valongo, both held in October 2024.

This year was also marked by a strong focus on the thematic area of violence against women within the Committee's social inclusion working area. Specifically, 2024 was the year in which **the regional workshop in Banjul and the final seminar of the international program "Towards Caring Territories for Women Victims of Violence" took place**. This program was co-led by the Committee and the Department of Seine-Saint-Denis, with the generous support of the French Development Agency (FDA).

Within the same social inclusion axis, **the continuation of the work on the anti-racist agenda initiated in 2023 is also noteworthy**, thanks to the leadership of the Barcelona Municipality, which hosted the 4th UNESCO Global Forum against Racism and Discrimination, held from 10 to 11 December 2024.



Strengthening the Global Movement of Human Rights Cities



Launch of the Third Wave of the Global Campaign “10, 100, 1,000 Human Rights Cities and Territories by 2030”

Two years after its launch, the Global Campaign has consolidated an active community of more than 120 local and regional governments (LRGs) committed to strengthening the implementation of human rights, promoting a new generation of rights at the local level, and positioning LRGs as key actors in building this universal framework.

In this context, 2024 marked the launch of the **third wave of the Campaign**, with three strategic objectives:

- **Reinforce the participation of current members**, encouraging their role as active promoters to generate a multiplying effect that expands the network of committed territories.
- **Support local human rights initiatives**, facilitating their international projection and showcasing their contributions through the Campaign.
- **Promote global advocacy**, calling for a more inclusive multilateralism that recognizes and integrates LRGs into international human rights agendas and mechanisms, especially within the United Nations system.

Over the past year, the Campaign has focused its efforts on highlighting the pioneering role of LRGs in promoting a new generation of human rights: more inclusive, intersectional, and grounded in territorial realities. This perspective aims to expand the traditional notion of rights—beyond “recognizing, protecting, and guaranteeing”—to include a **fourth pillar: the activation of local communities as living promoters of the universal human rights framework**.

For this reason, the third wave adopts the slogan: **“Pioneering Local Public Policies to Uphold Dignity for All,”** reaffirming the capacity of territories to lead profound transformations through everyday life, public space, and the commons.



Key Milestones and Achievements of the Global Campaign in 2024



Academy and Conference: “Human Rights Go Local”

The then Coordinator of the Committee, Amanda Fléty Martínez, was invited by the International Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at the Local and Regional Levels, under the auspices of UNESCO, to participate in the **2024 edition of the Academy and Conference “Human Rights Go Local,”** titled **“Accountability in Action: Human Rights Action Plans of Local Governments”**, which took place online from February 5 to 8, 2024.

Specifically, the Committee participated on [Day 2: “Learnings from the Territory.”](#) The Coordinator emphasized the key role of LRGs due to their proximity to the people, as well as the Committee’s work in supporting their potential through initiatives such as the global campaign and the process of updating UCLG’s Charter-Agenda.



UCLG Retreat 2024

On 21 February 2024, [our co-presidency Utrecht, represented by Hans Sackers](#), Head of International Strategy Programs, participated in the UCLG Retreat 2024 held in Barcelona, to boost the invitation to LRGs to join the global campaign.

This effort added to [the call made the previous day by our co-president Philippe Rio](#), Mayor of Grigny, in support of SDG 1 “No Poverty.” “We must fight poverty through LRGs by encouraging active community participation to co-construct international public policies and thus make the right to the city a reality for all.”



The High Commissioner Invites LRGs to Join the Global Campaign

On 20 March 2024, in its [“Summary of the expert meeting on enhancing capacity-building for local governments to incorporate human rights into all their work”](#) (available in English only), the High Commissioner listed [“Join the global campaign launched by UCLG ‘10, 100, 1,000 Human Rights Cities and Territories by 2030’”](#) as one of the recommendations for LRGs to strengthen their capacities.



Boosting the Third Wave of the Global Campaign at the OIDP Valongo 2024 Conference

On 18 October 2024, within the framework of the 23rd OIDP Conference in Valongo, [the Committee facilitated a session to boost the third wave of the global campaign](#) through the experience of four Lusophone local territories in Brazil, Mozambique, and Portugal as pioneers in the implementation of the universal framework. Benedetta Cosco, Project Officer at UCLG-CSIPDHR, demonstrated how the global campaign has made it possible to identify the political priorities of more than 100 members and define what human rights promotion means in territories. Geraldina Bonifácio, Mayor of Boane; Patrícia Marques, Open Government Coordinator in São Paulo; and Sílvia Silva, Head of the Social Development Division in Torres Vedras, shared how participation has been fundamental in guaranteeing human rights through civil society inclusion, community empowerment, and principles of non-discrimination.



The Updating Process of UCLG Charter-Agenda on Human Rights in the City

On July 4, 2024, the meeting [“Capacity building for local governments to realize human rights for all”](#) was held as a side event to the 56th session of the Human Rights Council. The session was

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The aim of the session was to share conclusions and discuss the implementation of the recommendations made by OHCHR in its “Summary of the expert meeting on enhancing capacity-building for local governments to incorporate human rights into all their work” held in August 2023 in Geneva. Among its recommendations, the report invites local governments to join the global campaign “10, 100, 1000 Human Rights Cities and Territories by 2030.”

Emilia Saiz, UCLG Secretary General, participated online to share the challenges faced by local governments in implementing human rights in general and engaging with the United Nations mechanisms on the topic, as well as to reflect on how the UN system can support local governments in this regard. She also emphasized the essential role of the municipalist movement in implementing human rights, since it places them at the heart of local service provision, care systems, and local democracy, in harmony with the planet and future generations.



Meeting “Building Local Governments’ Capacities to Realize Human Rights for All,” side event to the 56th session of the Human Rights Council

On 4 July 2024, the meeting **“Capacity building for local governments to realize human rights for all”** was held as a side event to the 56th session of the Human Rights Council. The session was organized by the Permanent Missions of the Republic of Korea, Chile, Egypt, Romania, and OHCHR at the Palais des Nations in Geneva.

The session aimed to share conclusions and discuss the implementation of the recommendations made by OHCHR in its “Summary of the expert meeting on enhancing capacity-building for local governments to incorporate human rights into all their work,” held in August 2023 in Geneva. Among its recommendations, the report invites local governments to join the global campaign “10, 100, 1000 Human Rights Cities and Territories by 2030.”

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Recognition of the Key Role of LRGs in the Joint Report by the UN Special Rapporteurs on “Extreme Poverty and Human Rights” and “Adequate Housing”

Based on contributions from UCLG and the Committee, the UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights and the UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing included the “Strengthening of the Role of Regional and Local Governments” as a fundamental axis of their annual

report: [*Breaking the cycle: ending the criminalization of homelessness and poverty*](#). The study aims to help national governments apply the Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights to decriminalize homelessness and the subsistence activities of impoverished people.

[**This important recognition**](#) was achieved thanks to UCLG's formal contribution to the report, submitted by the Committee and its members at the end of 2023 under the title [*The role of Local and Regional Governments in relation to the decriminalization of homelessness and poverty*](#) (available in English only). The contribution compiles practical experiences, good practices, and key advocacy messages from about 50 representatives of local and regional governments in 11 countries across three continents: the Americas, Europe, and Africa.



Support for Mercociudades' Online Course: "Cities with Memory and Future"

From August to September 2024, the Mercociudades Network offered the course "Cities with Memory and Future," with support from the MERCOSUR Institute of Public Policies on Human Rights (IPPDH), within the framework of the work agenda of the Network's Thematic Unit on Human Rights and Migration.

The main objective of the training was to discuss the major challenges faced by local governments in implementing policies on Memory, Truth, and Justice, related to the management of Memory Sites and Spaces. It also aimed to train relevant public sector actors, members of organizations, and academia on the marking, preservation, and management of such spaces for the promotion of human rights.

Amanda Fléty Martínez, Coordinator of the Committee, moderated [**Module 3: "Local Management of Memory Sites and Spaces,"**](#) held on 19 September 2024. The session focused on the paths and experiences of various municipalities in the management and co-management of Memory Sites and Spaces in cities, tools and programs for promoting human rights in local governance, and innovative strategies for promoting democratic cities.



Start of Work with OHCHR to Consolidate a Guidance Framework for Building a Human Rights City

In October 2024, collaboration began with OHCHR to consolidate a "Guidance Framework for Building a Human Rights City." This process was launched in response to the need expressed by several members of the global campaign for common frameworks to support the global Human Rights Cities movement. It also aims to continue strengthening collaboration between OHCHR, UCLG, and the Committee. In 2025, members of the Committee, the global campaign, and the Steering Committee in charge of updating the Charter-Agenda will be invited to contribute to this framework.



14th World Human Rights Cities Forum in Gwangju

In collaboration with the UN Human Rights Office and the Raoul Wallenberg Institute, the session **“Social Movements and Inclusive Participation in Cities”** was co-organized for the 14th World Human Rights Cities Forum (WHRCF) in Gwangju under the theme “Civic Space and Human Rights Cities.”

The session was moderated by Benedetta Cosco, Program Officer of the Committee; featured an opening speech by Tim Whyte, Secretary General of ActionAid Denmark; and included participation from Bongile Mbingo, Mayor of Ezulwini; Jose Molintas, Councilor of Baguio; Marta Costa, Head of the Youth Division of Valongo; Goizane Mota, Public Officer for Migration and Interculturality of the City Council of Bilbao; and Tikender Panwar, Member of the Urban Policy Commission of Kerala.

Participants discussed how cities and local authorities can create inclusive environments where citizens actively participate in public decision-making processes. The discussion also addressed the global decline of civic space and how local governments are key actors in reversing this trend.



The Human Rights Council Approves Resolution 57/12 “Local Governments and Human Rights”

On 10 October 2024, the Human Rights Council approved the resolution **“Local Governments and Human Rights”** to draw attention to the need to define the distribution of responsibilities and strengthen institutional coordination between national and local governments in order to effectively implement international human rights obligations at all levels of government. The resolution also emphasizes the importance of improving the capacities of public officials in LRGs.



Key Topics of the Year



Forging a Global Community of Local Women Leaders Fighting Violence Against Women and Girls



African Local Women Leaders Join Forces to Combat Violence Against Women Under the Auspices of REFELA

From 22 to 24 January 2024, the Committee and its co-presidency of Seine-Saint-Denis co-organized, with the support of Rohey Malick Lowe, Mayor of Banjul and President of the Network of local elected Women of Africa (REFELA), a regional training titled “Towards caring territories for women victims of violence” in the capital of The Gambia.

The event was organized within the framework of the international three-year program “Towards Caring Territories for Women Victims of Violence,” launched in November 2021, co-led by the Committee and the Observatory of Violence Against Women of the Department of Seine-Saint-Denis (OVF) and financed by the French Development Agency (AFD).

Following the success of the first training held in 2022 in Iztapalapa, which focused on the Latin American context, this second edition brought together approximately 30 participants from 12 African countries. The objective was to foster exchanges, peer learning, and networking to emphasize the fundamental role of local governments in protecting women and girls from violence.

The international training concluded with the “Banjul Declaration,” which sets forth the commitment of local and regional women leaders to end violence against women and calls on all levels of government to engage and take action on this global issue.



Online Meeting on the Exchange of the “Caring Territories for Women Victims of Violence” Charter of Values

On Wednesday, 12 June 2024, the Committee organized an online exchange meeting on the Charter of Values, a document outlining the common principles that local and regional governments should uphold to build “Caring Territories for Women Victims of Violence.” This charter aligns with the objectives of the international program of the same name and is the result of three years of joint work between the CSIPDHR and the Observatory on Violence Against Women (OVF) of the Department of Seine-Saint-Denis.

The content of the Charter is based on the reflections and commitments gathered in the Declarations of Iztapalapa (Mexico) and Banjul (Gambia), adopted in December 2022 and January 2024, respectively. Both emphasize the need for local and regional governments to also address the intimate and everyday spheres as an essential part of the fight against violence towards women.

Participants in this virtual meeting were representatives of local and regional governments who had previously attended the training courses developed within the framework of the program.



Over 50 Local Women Leaders Gather in Seine-Saint-Denis for the Final Seminar of the “Towards Caring Territories for Women Victims of Violence” Program

More than 50 local women leaders and experts gathered in Seine-Saint-Denis to highlight the crucial role of LRGs in eradicating violence against women during the final seminar of the international three-year program “Towards Caring Territories for Women Victims of Violence.” This international program is based on the 20 years of experience of the OVF of Seine-Saint-Denis and UCLG through the Committee, with funding from AFD.

Over three days, participants reflected on the lessons learned throughout three years of work, shared effective local tools, and explored strategies to build international alliances with a human rights-based approach.

The event provided an opportunity to outline local action paths towards Beijing +30 and CSW69, driven by UCLG’s collaboration with the WYDE “Women’s Leadership Initiative” program, funded by the European Union in partnership with UN Women, International IDEA, and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

As a result of the program and this alliance between local and regional women leaders, key learning tools were developed:

- **Thematic Sheets:** six compilations of good practices implemented by LRGs from different regions to address various forms of violence against women, including public space violence, sexual violence, intimate partner violence, female genital mutilation, forced marriages, and femicides. Available in Arabic, Spanish, English, and French.
- **Online Course (MOOC):** the first digital training tool specifically designed for local and regional governments, their staff, and anyone interested in preventing and eradicating violence against women at the local level. This tool was developed by the Committee and OVF, with the support of UCLG’s Learning team. Available in Spanish, English, and French.

At the end of the program, Ernestine Ronai, Director of the OVF, and Emilia Saiz proclaimed the “Charter of Values for the Protection and Care of Women Victims of Violence.”



Continuing the Momentum of the Anti-Racist Agenda

2024 marked the second consecutive year in which the Committee continued to promote the global anti-racist agenda, thanks to the leadership of the Barcelona Municipality and various LRGs worldwide. Throughout 2024, this agenda has been framed and advanced through the Committee's initiatives relating to the human rights thematic axis, such as the global campaign and the update of the Charter-Agenda. This has provided an opportunity to bring international perspective to local actions, promote peer exchange and learning, and foster collective reflection focusing on social justice, historical reparation, and decolonial approaches.

The Committee's work on the anti-racist agenda and the fight against discrimination has positioned itself as a key cross-cutting axis of UCLG's Local Social Covenant. It has focused on prioritizing fundamental aspects such as housing, climate justice, cultural rights, and universal access to quality public services. This approach also highlights **the relevance of integrating intersectionality and decolonial perspectives into public policies, promoting profound transformations toward more inclusive and equitable societies.**



Key Milestones and Achievements of the 2024 Anti-Racist Agenda



4th UNESCO Global Forum Against Racism and Discrimination

On 10 December 2024, in commemoration of the International Human Rights Day, the 4th UNESCO Global Forum Against Racism and Discrimination began, with the Municipality of Barcelona as host. This key milestone consolidated the work this local government has been promoting for two years within the Committee. Emilia Saiz, Secretary General of UCLG, participated in the Plenary Session "Cities as Catalysts: Municipal Strategies for Inclusive Local Policies," to reaffirm the municipalist movement's commitment to leading systemic change toward more equal and just societies through the Local Social Covenant.

The Plenary Session also brought together the cities of Barcelona, Irbid, London, Bologna, The Hague, São Leopoldo, and La Courneuve and was moderated by Fabiana Goyeneche, Chair of the ICCAR Steering Committee.



Side Event "Cities and Human Rights: Collaborative Approaches Against Racism and Discrimination"

Ahead of the 4th UNESCO Global Forum Against Racism and Discrimination, the Committee, in collaboration with the Barcelona City Council, OHCHR, and UNESCO, held the side event "Cities and Human Rights: Collaborative Approaches Against Racism and Discrimination."

The session featured Ashwini K.P., UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance; Philippe Rio, Co-President of CSIPDHR and Mayor of Grigny; and representatives from the cities of The Hague, Montevideo, Gwangju, La Courneuve, and Esplugues de Llobregat.

In both sessions, representatives of local and regional governments shared the approaches being implemented in their public policies to reinforce their commitment against racism and discrimination:

- Employing decolonial and intersectional approaches to repair communities.
- Highlighting the responsibility of LRGs as institutions that may have a potential role in perpetrating racial discrimination and xenophobia.
- Addressing the spatial dimension of discrimination through territorial factors.

Communication: Amplifying the Voice of LRGs

The mission of the Committee is to serve as a meeting point and global platform for LRGs to debate, share, and promote collective initiatives on social inclusion, participatory democracy, and human rights. As a thematic commission of UCLG, the Committee works to articulate the common voice of the global municipalist organization on key issues of this broad agenda, with a view to making the right to the city a reality in local and regional cities and territories around the world.

One of the key actions to fulfill the mission of UCLG-CSIPDHR is communication activities. This area of work corresponds to the following objectives:

- Provide international visibility to members' initiatives.
- Promote peer learning and the exchange of good practices.
- Foster international advocacy on the thematic axes addressed.

All communication activities of the Committee are carried out in the three working languages (English, Spanish, and French) and are disseminated through existing communication channels: website, newsletter, and social media — X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, and LinkedIn.