REPORT ON THE DEBATE
ON LOCAL SOCIAL INCLUSION POLICIES

UCLG WORLD COUNCIL, ISTANBUL
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1. Presentation

This report sets out the thoughts discussed in the debate on local social inclusion policies at the UCLG World Council held in Istanbul. The session focused on analysing the main challenges for inclusion policies and defining some of the solutions local governments can use to deal with them. The starting point was the policy document *Let’s build the inclusive cities of the 21st century*, promoted by the Social Inclusion Committee and adopted by the organisation as a whole the following day. The debate was chaired by the Mayor of Barcelona (Spain) with the participation of Mayors from Guarulhos (Brazil), Montevideo (Uruguay), Jericho (Palestine), Pixley ka seme (South Africa) and Istanbul (Turkey), and the Deputy Mayor for Social Action and Citizenship of Barcelona.

2. Speeches

**Jordi Hereu**, Mayor of Barcelona

The current crisis is questioning the ultra-liberal line that considered the market as being the sole driving force behind progress and that left the construction of cities in its hands. This model does not generate any kind of social cohesion or guarantee opportunities. For this reason, we understand that the future of our societies depends on their capacity to reconcile a social model and an economic model. But the crisis has also cast doubt on certain models of growth. Among the many derivatives arising from the economic situation we are experiencing now, one is obvious: the disappearance of some illusions that made reference to immediate and unlimited gains and the need for a new ethics, both for economy and politics.
Faced with this situation, Barcelona wants to reaffirm itself as a city able to combine economic and productive activity, urban transformation and territorial cohesion in a diverse yet common territory. From this conviction, Barcelona wants to reaffirm its commitment to the challenges shared by cities, the most important being the promotion of social inclusion. Our city continues to redouble its efforts internationally to continue bringing together cohesive cities with social welfare, clearly committed to the eradication of poverty, promoters of social justice, defenders of human rights and of democratic values and procedures. Hence, Barcelona works side by side with other cities. Our active presence in the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) world organisation confirms this. Barcelona is the headquarters of the UCLG World Secretariat and works at the head of the committees for Social Inclusion and Participative Democracy, Culture and in the International Observatory of Participative Democracy. The Social Inclusion Committee, chaired by Deputy Mayor Ricard Gomà, gathers us here today to debate on local inclusion policies and has promoted the preparation of a social inclusion policy document that will be submitted for the approval of the UCLG World Council tomorrow.

Barcelona is also the headquarters of the Permanent Secretariat for the Union for the Mediterranean, the common area of cooperation and exchange between the two shores of this sea of civilizations. Barcelona thus expresses its wish to be present in the world: working to build a peaceful and supportive Mediterranean; promoting global human development and cooperation on economic and political matters; fostering co-development programmes; and exchanging knowledge and relations between civil societies.

The Millennium Development Goals agreed in 2000 by 189 UN states are today in doubt. Over the last few years, situations have appeared in force making it extremely difficult to achieve them. The food and finance crises have increased the risk of poverty and social exclusion in the world. And it is in the urban environment where the human and social effects of exclusion appear. To this global crisis situation we must add the impact of the current accelerated urbanisation process, a context that puts cities before a political challenge that is of crucial management: building cohesive cities within the framework of globalisation. For this reason, social inclusion policies must be at the strategic centre of the policy agenda of local governments in this century, together with the financial, human and infrastructure resources needed for their development. This is particularly important if the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals is to be a reality and not just a simple declaration of intentions of the States. It is an obvious fact that local governments play a fundamental role these days in the development of public social cohesion policies, which are often carried out going beyond their powers. A few examples are: local governments guarantee universal access to basic services and safeguard the rights of citizens; they plan actions to fight against poverty and to generate quality employment; they deal with people and families in vulnerable situations; they create urban policies integrating the social diversity; they make accessible mobility possible through quality public transport; they make a commitment to the fight to slow down climate change; they generate areas of democratic participation, which are very important for the collective construction of the city; they manage the contemporary
migratory flows with guarantees of rights and duties; etc. Within this framework, UCLG can and must be the catalyst of the leading role of cities with regard to the Millennium Goals and the fight against poverty and exclusion.

The policy document *Let’s build the inclusive cities of the 21st century*, which will be submitted for the approval of the World Council, draws on the conclusions of the 1st International Seminar on Innovative Local Policies for Social Inclusion (Barcelona, 27 and 28 September 2007) and on the political reflections fostered by the Social Inclusion Committee within UCLG. Put another way: *Let’s build the inclusive cities of the 21st century* means that local policy action is fundamental for building a new globalisation with a human face and for building a world supported by the criteria of social justice, solidarity, respect for differences and commitment to sustainability.

**Elói Pietá**, Mayor of Guarulhos and co-Chairman of the Social Inclusion and Participative Democracy Committee of UCLG

The Frente Nacional de Prefeitos of Brazil began work on social inclusion matters before the creation of UCLG: within the framework of the Forum of Local Authorities for Social Inclusion and Participative Democracy, a network of cities that has met since 2001 within the framework of the World Social Forum. UCLG Social Inclusion Committee allows these questions to be raised today more specifically through its three working groups: social inclusion, participative democracy and human rights. The document *Let’s build the inclusive cities of the 21st century* marks a very important moment for the Committee, as its adoption by the World Council will be the recognition of several years of reflection. I would like to thank the city of Barcelona for the tireless work it has promoted over these last few years within the framework of this Committee.

There are today, without doubt, structural conditions of poverty that must be fought against. But we must also anticipate the consequences of the current situation so that the crisis we are experiencing does not lead to a reduction in the resources assigned by governments to social inclusion policies. For this reason, it is essential that UCLG adopts the lines proposed in the document *Let’s build the inclusive cities of the 21st century*. 
All of this forces us to think about the Millennium Goals and decentralised cooperation: in 2010, the Heads of State and Government will meet in the UN for the first evaluation of the Goals. UCLG has a fundamental role to play to influence the decisions taken there, so a priority objective of our association must be to be present in the decision-making areas of the United Nations on behalf of local governments worldwide.

**Ricard Gomà**, Deputy Mayor of Barcelona and co-Chairman of the Social Inclusion and Participative Democracy Committee of UCLG

The policy document *Let’s build the inclusive cities of the 21st century* was created from a central theme of the Committee: social inclusion, which it has been working on for seven years (since the 1st World Social Forum in Porto Alegre). This text will be presented tomorrow to the World Council for approval, which will contribute to reinforcing not just the Committee as a tool for its member cities, but also the network of cities worldwide that work to create the structural conditions needed for social inclusion. Below, I am going to try to set out the most important ideas that support the document *Let’s build the inclusive cities of the 21st century*.

Social inclusion policies are linked to four main fundamental themes. Firstly, they guarantee the link between local and global in the fight against poverty and exclusion, and in the action for another possible world. Inclusion policies can support an agenda of local and global human development that allows us to deal with the new complexities of a globalised world where a large part of the population is found in cities and in metropolitan areas. There is no doubt that this confers a fundamental role on local governments in the mitigation of the perverse consequences of the current model of globalisation, which reproduces and deepens inequalities and social exclusion.

Exclusion is the process by which certain people or groups are prevented access to the basic rights of citizens. Local policy action allows cohesive and democratic societies to be built that guarantee the exercise of these rights. Social inclusion must be at the centre of local governments’ policies and, at the same time, they must have available the necessary human, infrastructure and financial resources for the development of these policies. The availability of these resources is also essential so that the realisation of the Millennium Development Goals is also a reality in our cities and, therefore, in the world in which we live.
Secondly, inclusion policies must also appear as guarantees in the affirmation of rights. Therefore, they must tend to weaken or eliminate the structural factors that generate exclusion, articulate public care and support services for vulnerable social groups, as well as propose personalised routes for social inclusion with empowerment mechanisms to make vulnerable people the true protagonist of their own paths to personal autonomy and of the construction of social bonds. From the point of view of their conception, social inclusion policies must guarantee universal access to basic services and safeguard citizens’ rights; they must aim for the transformation of social reality on the basis of the values of equality, solidarity and respect for differences; and they must be aimed at the satisfaction of material needs to lead a dignified life, as well as the satisfaction of needs relating to social bonding processes.

Exclusion also appears as territorial segregation of the population and as privatisation processes of public space. For this reason, it is important that social inclusion policies adopt the objective of promoting an integrating urban development policy that respects the social diversity, avoiding segmentation of the population, whether for ethnic, cultural or social reasons. It is necessary to combat spatial segregation with actions such as comprehensive renovation of districts, providing the most underprivileged urban areas with quality public spaces and equipment, promoting diversified uses of land or fostering a real social mix in housing.

Metropolitan regions require a special mention, as they constitute social and economic urban constants that are decisive for re-drawing the current conditions of globalisation. Thus, it is necessary to articulate agreed policies and services among the local institutions of the same metropolitan area in order to draw up more efficient policies.

A third element to consider is that of social inclusion policies as recognisers and promotors of diversity. All social inclusion policies must lead to overcoming inequalities, but also promote a respectful agreement of co-existence with the differences. The local ambit is the area of effective management of the migratory reality and the challenge lies in how to plan its action from a flexible, but comprehensive, perspective. This planning must be permanently adaptable to the new social demands, and able to innovate the action facing a new and rich socio-cultural diversity. The perspective of inclusion, therefore, entails promoting intercultural relations between culturally different communities on the basis of a co-existence framework set out on shared civic values.
Finally, in fourth place, it must be said that social inclusion policies are a fundamental element for stimulating democracy. The procedures of representative democracy are absolutely necessary, but they are also insufficient to fully incorporate all citizens in the decision-making process and to promote their critical capacity. Citizens’ participation in inclusion policies, in their design, implementation and evaluation stages, is a condition for tangibly improving the quality of life of those people being excluded or at risk of exclusion, thus ensuring, much more solidly, the affirmation of their rights.

In short, the fight against exclusion is a global effort that is directly rooted in local contexts. This is why it is essential that local governments make joint commitments between each other, but also together with their respective civil societies. The affirmation of rights, the promotion of diversity and fostering of participative democracy are the backbone of a specific understanding of local inclusion policies. An understanding that must provide us with the tools to keep working for inclusive cities and fair globalisation. The Social Inclusion and Participative Democracy Committee of UCLG aims to continue contributing along these lines. We are convinced that, with the World Council’s approval of the document *Let’s build the inclusive cities of the 21st century*, we will be strengthened and will have provided ourselves with a new tool to continue combining efforts for social inclusion and justice in all cities worldwide.

**Ricardo Ehrlich**, Mayor of Montevideo and representative of the Ibero-American Capital Cities Union

Social policies are a fundamental element of the policies of construction, management and future prospects of local areas as they contribute to their sustainability. In the current context of civilization change, the construction of cities demands the definition of comprehensive proposals that combine territorial planning, economic development and the promotion of quality of the life of the population. These proposals must also be the result of an articulated work between the different levels of government: local, regional and global. We are in a period of rapid and intense changes to which we must offer flexible, rapid and complex answers, but that also contemplate long-term planning needs. Thus, social policies are not just answers to urgent situations, but a fundamental element of strategic planning. This raises great political challenges. One of the central elements for building an integrated society and for generating inclusion mechanisms is to build citizenships (in plural) through citizen participation. This means starting participative processes that, due to their characteristics, run up against the short adaptation periods required to deal with the circumstantial challenges. We understand that the solution to this contradiction is to link strategic planning with participatory processes. The growing concentration of the population in urban areas makes future efforts of the cities in this direction particularly important.

Policies promoted by the cities that are committed to inclusion and solidarity must be shown in the design of the city. The local area, left to its own devices, is remodelled
spontaneously generating processes of separation of its components that may lead, in extreme cases, to social fragmentation and to the erection of real or virtual walls in the heart of a society. One of the strongest expressions of this in urban areas takes the form of ghettos and illicit settlements. In these contexts, local authorities have to ensure political leadership that allows consensus to be generated ensuring that, through participation and diversity of the society, a socially cohesive city can be built. There is no doubt that the central elements in the design of a city have to do with the generation of public areas, which are characterised by their ability for integration and democratic potential. They are the first to feel the impact of a society that is fractured and that has insufficient social inclusion mechanisms, hence local authorities must redouble their efforts to preserve these areas. Another central element, without doubt, is the design of public transport, which has a direct influence on the level of integration of the society. And, finally, polycentric city designs, in other words, with multiple centres that go against such difficult logic that is established spontaneously of centres and outskirts, and that inevitably appear at a territorial level.

On the other hand, we must also mention the need to reinforce those mechanisms that lead to the development of the sense of belonging to a place. This can be achieved by improving education or the quality of life of citizens. In the current context of accelerated mobility of people and communities, this element is particularly important to avoid losing touch with one’s roots and aculturization. The promotion of interculturality and coexistence are, in this sense, essential mechanisms for generating greater social inclusion.

The next element that is to be highlighted is the importance of information and training mechanisms – particularly, training for participation and for the construction of citizenships. One of the greatest responsibilities of local governments comprises the development of participative areas and creating the framework on which participation processes can be built that go beyond a merely municipal ambit.

Latin America is perhaps one of the regions in the world where there is still the greatest rate of social inequality. Over the last few years, Uruguay has experienced a serious economic crisis that has caused a deep social fracture. In the city of Montevideo alone, in the last ten years the number of people forced to emigrate outside the formal urban network has tripled, and one in ten people live in slums. These processes destroying the social framework occur faster than the local governments’ ability to respond. But we are convinced that the ability to react of local governments is multiplied if we manage to vitalise society. So the promotion of citizen participation policies is fundamental as a tool for generating greater social inclusion in our cities. Montevideo is following this route.

In conclusion, the key to the effectiveness of social inclusion policies lies in the strengthening of civil society as a central element for the creation of cohesive societies.
Hassan Saleh Hussein, Mayor of Jericho and Vice-President of the Association of Palestinian Local Authorities

Jericho has begun numerous social inclusion actions, such as the creation of an education centre aimed at youths whose families cannot take care of them, the creation of a Youth Council bringing the culture and democratic life to the children, or the design of policies combating discrimination, whether gender or religion-related. It has also created Citizens’ Councils, which are now grouped at a provincial level to improve the impact of their work. We are convinced that social development is impossible without economic development: therefore, social inclusion policies must also respond to the economic problems of the most underprivileged populations.

The occupation of Palestinian territories aggravates the social situation of cities such as Jericho and is the first obstacle for the development of social inclusion policies. Not all the territories have the same status: there are completely Palestinian territories, other governed by the Palestinians (but where Israel controls security) and, finally, territories completely controlled by the Israelis. For this reason, there are many situations requiring the collaboration of the State of Israel to implement certain actions and this causes great difficulties. The international conferences, such as the one that took place in Paris, are of great importance for Palestine because they can contribute to resolving some of the environmental, health and financial problems we face. There is no doubt that Palestine needs the political and economic support of the countries in the north. Since 1994 and the founding of the national regime, Palestinians maintain the hope of freedom and independence.

In this context, the development of social inclusion policies in Palestine has many additional problems that we try to overcome promoting the participation of citizens in public life.

Hazel Jenkins, Mayoress of Pixley ka Seme and Deputy Chairperson of the South African Local Government Association

With 11 official languages and 54 million inhabitants (including the immigrant and refugee population), South Africa is a multi-cultural country. Much progress has been made in participative democracy and social inclusion matters since the first democratic elections in 1994, but there are still numerous problems.

Regarding participative democracy, the Constitution considers the national, provincial and local governments as an integral part of the government of the country. Local governments participate directly at national government level through the National Provincial Council, a body that is known in some countries as “the second house of Parliament”. Local governments also directly participate in the National Fiscal and Financial Committee, chained by the Minister of Finance. Current legislation relating to
local government also demands the creation of committees formed by citizens, as well as the designation of social workers who contribute to identifying community needs and facilitating their access to social programmes. The social workers present their reports to the local governments and they, in turn, present them to the national government. Local and provincial governments have an agreed social programme. However, the municipalities also define their own programme in close collaboration with the community. Also, and as a prior requirement to the approval of new laws, provincial governments must organise public information sessions for citizens. Regarding legislative initiative, we must finally highlight that citizens are also authorised to propose laws directly.

Regarding social inclusion, the South African Local Government Association, which unites all the municipalities in the country and is legally recognised by the Constitution, participates in the development of the Social Cohesion Master Plan. This policy framework is a tool to help local governments in the drafting of their inclusion policies (to support the immigrant population, political refugees and disabled people; for access to public services; to promote diversity, etc.).

Last year South Africa experienced a very painful situation due to the popular rejection of the immigrant population. This situation shook a country that has been able to put an end, peacefully, to a long process of racial discrimination and to found a regime of respect for diversity. The lesson taken from all this has been a greater awareness of the need to promote social inclusion and citizens’ participation locally as a fundamental element to combat this kind of problem.

The South African Local Government Association adheres in its entirety to the contents of the document *Let’s build the inclusive cities of the 21st century.*
Kadir Topbas, Mayor of Istanbul and Vice-President of UCLG

[Closing words]

As the level of government nearest to citizens, local governments are a key part for strengthening democracy, due to which they must guarantee the development of participation processes and the provision of public services. After the reform process of the state that has operated in Turkey for the last few years, a new body has been created, the Municipal Council, which is formed by experts and representatives of the community and has the function of debating improvements to urban matters.

Despite the contextual differences of our environments, we all share the same desire to lead a peaceful life, to be free and to have rights. As a poet said: to understand one another you do not need to speak the same language, just share the same feeling.
Appendix

LETS BUILD THE INCLUSIVE CITIES OF THE 21ST CENTURY

This policy paper on social inclusion was adopted in Istanbul by the World Council of United Cities and Local Governments on the 30th November 2008

This document draws on the conclusions of the ‘1st International Seminar on Innovative Local Policies for Social Inclusion’ (Barcelona, 27-28 September 2007) and on the political reflections developed in the framework of United Cities and Local Governments through its regional sections and work committees. It sets out the main political guidelines to be followed while conceiving of, and developing, public policies for social inclusion. It also sets the stance of the UCLG regarding this issue and offers guidance for dialogue with other international organizations or agencies.

Inclusion policies as a global social policy

1. Local governments play a key role in a globalized world where most of the population lives in cities and metropolitan areas. This is a world facing new social, economic, political and cultural complexities, with new and diverse challenges and opportunities. Nonetheless, the current era of globalization brings inequalities into the light; in fact, poverty and social inequality have increased in all continents since the last decades of the 20th Century, thus leading to the social exclusion of many people.

2. Social exclusion is the process by which certain people and groups find their access to basic citizens’ rights systematically blocked (civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights). Therefore, exclusion has various dimensions: social, economic, political, cultural, relational, digital, generational and gender-based. It is also expressed in various forms: poverty, instability at the workplace, educational shortfalls; disabilities, dependency and a work overload while caring for the home; gender-based discrimination, sexual orientation, religion or ethnic origin; a weakening of community relationships and the fall of affective ties; gaps among citizens based on ethnic and cultural issues; a lack in the provision of high quality basic services; and a loss of cultural expressions.

3. From local political actions it is possible to build closely knitted and democratic societies that ensure the full exercise of rights. That is why social exclusion should be tackled from its underlying causes. In order to do this, social inclusion policies should be a centrepiece of the political agendas of local governments in this century, together with the human and financial resources, and infrastructure necessary to make this possible. This is especially important for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals to be a reality in our cities, and thus, in the world in which we live in.

1 This seminar was organized by the City Council of Barcelona and UCLG’s Social Inclusion and Participatory Democracy Committee, with the support from the Catalan Government and scientific assessment from the DPU (Development Planning Unit) of the University College of London. At this seminar there were participants from Eldoret (Kenya), Rosario (Argentina), Diyarbakir (Turkey), London (United Kingdom), Belo Horizonte and Porto Alegre (Brazil), Palmela (Portugal), Tacoma (United States of America), Cotacachi (Ecuador), Barcelona (Spain), Saint Denis (France) and Bandung (Indonesia). The representatives of these 12 cities, each with different realities, explained their different inclusion policies and at the same time had the mission to make a joint reflection on three thematic axes: (i) social justice and safeguarding rights; (ii) citizen participation and generating social networks; (iii) planning and sustainability of policies.
Inclusion policies as a guarantee to ascertain rights

4. **Social exclusion is visible in territories.** In the deteriorated historical centres and outskirts of big cities, especially in their metropolitan areas, in the proliferation of ‘shanty towns’, ‘favelas’ or ‘Villas’. In the undocumented conditions many migrants find themselves in. In the unequal treatment and discrimination towards women, different sexual orientations and minority ethnic and social groups. In the total lack of policies for equal opportunities for young people in risk of social exclusion. In the lack of care for children and elderly people. In the inadequacy of public spaces and services for disabled people. In the inaccessibility to public transport, especially for those who are socially or economically disadvantaged.

5. As a consequence of all this, from the viewpoint of their conception and management criteria, **inclusion policies should guarantee universal access to basic services and the safeguard of citizens’ rights**; also, they must be guided towards changing social reality based on the values of equality, solidarity and respect for differences; and finally, they must be committed to the world’s future, promoting sustainable development and fighting against climate change.

6. **Inclusion policies are aimed at meeting both the material needs necessary to live a decent life, and those needs linked to social ties.** It is in these policies that we must intertwine social diversity and the right to be different, by promoting equal relationships in order to reduce economic, social and cultural gaps. Particularly, social inclusion policies should guarantee a cut-down of poverty and generate occupation and income; they must promote health, personal autonomy, care for dependant people and support to their families; they must guarantee that disabled people can live an autonomous and decent life; they must allow for people to combine time dedicated to a paid job, care and bringing up their children with time for leisure; they must protect children and vulnerable elderly people; they must render access to culture, information and ongoing training more democratic; they must develop an urban model based on relationships of proximity and an accessible and sustainable mobility through high quality public transport; and, finally, they must promote democracy and a critical, participatory and co-responsible society.

7. **Exclusion can also be seen in the spatial segregation of population and in the privatisation of public spaces.** For this reason, **inclusive policies must set the goal of achieving an integrating urbanism policy that is respectful for social diversity** avoiding the creation of segmented population concentrations, whether they are for ethnic and cultural reasons or social reasons. It is necessary to fight spatial segregation through actions such as: a comprehensive rehabilitation of neighbourhoods; creating high quality public spaces and facilities for the least favoured urban areas; promoting different uses for the land; promoting social cohabitation regarding housing, in order for people with different origins and social and economic standards to share one same territory; to eliminate architectural barriers that may isolate certain neighbourhoods; and, finally, to take into account gender factors in urban planning.

8. **In relation to this issue, it is important to mention metropolitan areas, since they constitute urban, social and economic continuums that are vital to the current conditions of globalization.** For this reason, **it is necessary to coordinate joint policies and services between different local entities in one same metropolitan area in order to achieve more efficient policies.** From this metropolitan point of view, it is important to prioritize services to citizens (with regards to health, education, social services, housing and the promotion of high
quality occupation), as well as improving their mobility. Also, and since they are world economic centres, it is necessary to plan and develop infrastructures linking metropolises to the rest of the world.

9. **Insofar as possible, local governments should foresee social problems.** This means, on the one hand, that they should deal with the factors leading to situations or risks of exclusion from a structural point of view; and, on the other hand, they should base local action on a prior diagnosis of the needs. To do this, they should create tools to measure the impact of policies, such as social observatories. In addition to this, financial and political sustainability should be a fundamental criterion when designing inclusion policies, as well as providing ongoing training for all the players involved in these actions. Finally, these policies should be prepared with integral city programmes guided towards the inclusion of groups in social risk.

10. Given the different political competences at different government levels (local, metropolitan, regional, national and trans-national), a **multi-level approach is necessary in order to ensure that local inclusion policies fit in with supra-local policies.**

11. This is especially important since, generally, the local level does not have the essential inclusion mechanisms such as occupational, housing or urban mobility policies, among others. Therefore, it is necessary to call for a greater involvement of state agents in those policies that are key to social inclusion, as well as a greater decentralisation of resources in order for local governments to keep up these policies. The efficiency of these policies greatly depends on the level of decentralization of existing competences and resources.

**Inclusion policies as promoters of diversity**

12. **All social inclusion policies should lead to overcoming gender and ethnical inequalities,** as well as promoting a respectful co-existence, including all differences.

13. **Migration is a factor that explains global urbanism procedures.** It is estimated that half of the world population, 3,300 million people, live in urban environments. It is estimated that by 2030 this percentage will increase to 61%. Estimates also point out that 95% of this increase in urban population up to the year 2027 will be absorbed, mainly, by cities in the countries of origin of these migrations (migration from the countryside to the city).

14. The local level is the place for an effective management of the migratory reality. **For local governments, the challenge is how to plan their actions from a strategic, flexible and comprehensive point of view.** This planning should be constantly adaptable to new social demands and capable of innovating its actions to face the new and rich social and cultural diversity.

15. The perspective of inclusion implies promoting inter-cultural relations between culturally different communities. More specifically, **inter-cultural policies must be recognizable for their ability to both acknowledge differences and promote a cohabitation framework based on shared civic values.** This cohabitation agreement must be developed based on human rights and, particularly, on the right to the city.
16. It is necessary to promote the role of territories – fundamentally cities, and their metropolitan areas- to act as proactive agents in international cooperation networks, with regards to migrations. Public decentralized cooperation offers a great potential for cities issuing and receiving migrant people to work together, and it should aim at achieving human development under the conditions of globalization.

17. The procedures of representative democracy are insufficient to fully incorporate citizens as a whole into the decision-making procedures and to promote their critical ability. This is what participatory democracy procedures ensure: the right of citizens to permanently participate in the public arena, whether this is done in an organized way or individually. In this sense, participation should imply an act of co-responsibility, and for this it is essential to strengthen social networks and include the new players in public actions.

18. Also, to govern under conditions of social complexity means to do this from a perspective of governance. For this, it is necessary to bring in administration changes that make it possible to create a relational government that is able to apply a global and crosscutting action. This means having a holistic approach to problems and to find answers to them through inter-dependant and network actions of all the different players: public administrations (from all the different levels of government), associations and community organizations, and the private sector.

19. Plurality, conflicts and diversity must be accepted as co-substantial issues to the procedures of social participation. Citizens’ consensus very often is achieved from previous disagreements regarding how social challenges should be tackled, and this is why it is important to create permanent spaces for dialogue, debate and negotiation. As for the government, citizen participation must be part of a crosscutting strategy intertwining the different municipal areas through participation plans.

20. Citizen participation in inclusion policies (during the stages of design, implementation and assessment) is a pre-condition to expressly improve the quality of life of people facing or risking exclusion, thus ascertaining their rights. Equally, participation contributes to improving the quality of public policies in terms of efficiency and effectiveness.

21. Participation channels must be designed following the temporal and spatial availability of people, who must be able to combine participating on the public sphere with their private and working life. The public arena for political participation today is very diverse, since it materializes in the different spaces and times of every-day-life. This variety of participation channels for
the civil society, its organizations and the association and community tissue, together with the capacity of local governments of building bridges with these players, constitute key issues to try out new spaces for political participation.

22. Fighting against situations of exclusion is a global effort that is directly linked to local contexts. It is for this reason that it is essential for local governments to supportively commit to one another, together with their civil societies. Public decentralized co-operation is an efficient tool to promote a municipallistic, cross-border solidarity.

Bearing all this in mind, the Social Inclusion and Participatory Democracy Commission adopts the following general commitments within the United Cities and Local Governments:

- **To contribute to the promotion of a critical reflection and political debate on poverty, inequalities and social exclusion.** To define specific proposals and actions leading to the creation of local social inclusion policies.
- **To share with local governments the most relevant social inclusion policies and a stronger democracy.** To facilitate exchanging experiences and knowledge among cities across the world.
- **To keep up political dialogue with social movements** and the cross-border networks of the World Social Forum through the Forum of Local Authorities.