



ROUND TABLE

"LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND THE RIGHT TO THE CITY"

9 December 2011. 5 pm – 6:30 pm
Palazzo Vecchio, Florence

BACKGROUND

The 1990s was a milestone in terms of recognition of the role of local governments as pillars of states' democratic quality. Some years later, recognition of cities as key players in the guarantee of human rights in their role of providers of public services and agents responsible for education, health and housing policies would gain ground. This international debate would be translated in the claim for "the right to the city", according to which the city is a collective space which belongs to all its residents and which must offer the necessary conditions for a decent life from a social, political, cultural, economic and environmental point of view. As a result of this process, various local human rights charters were adopted from 2000 onwards:

- the *European Charter for the Safeguarding of Human Rights in the City* (Saint-Denis, 2000), signed by more than 350 European cities;
- the *World Charter on the Right to the City*, drafted by social movements gathered in the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre (2001);
- the *Charter of Rights and Responsibilities of Montreal* (2006);
- the *Mexico City Charter for the Right to the City* (2010).

The "right to a solidarity-based metropolis" would emerge afterwards intensively and is now being conceptualized.

GOAL AND STRUCTURE OF THE ROUND TABLE

In order to contribute to the international promotion of the right to the city, the UCLG Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights has drafted the **Global Charter-Agenda for Human Rights in the City**, an initiative that emerged from the Local Authorities Forum (FAL) for Social Inclusion and Participatory Democracy that took place in Caracas in 2006. Based on the discussions between local

governments from around the world that took place in this Forum, a group of experts from various countries wrote a first draft (2007-2008), which was then discussed and amended by elected representatives, experts and representatives of civil society from all over the world (2009-2010).

Under the leadership initially of Barcelona Provincial Council and subsequently of the city of Nantes and the Pays de la Loire Region, the Global Charter-Agenda has been collectively discussed at several international events, including the last three FALs and World Social Forums (Nairobi, 2007; Belém do Pará, 2009; and Dakar, 2011), the I and II Peripheral Local Authorities Forum (Nanterre, 2006; Getafe, 2010), the 5th World Urban Forum of UN HABITAT (Rio de Janeiro, 2010), the 4th World Forum on Human Rights in Nantes (2010) and the 3rd UCLG World Congress (Mexico City, 2010). Research centers such as the Catalonia Institute for Human Rights (IDHC) and the Social Studies Centre (CES) of Coimbra University have also been involved in this process from the very beginning.

The added value of the Global Charter-Agenda for Human Rights *in the City* is that each human right featured in the document is accompanied by an action plan that serves as reference for concrete steps to undertake by local governments. Signatory cities are invited to set up a local agenda with deadlines and indicators in order to assess their efficiency in implementing these rights. The Charter-Agenda will come into effect in each city after a consultation and participation process allowing residents to discuss it and adapt it both to local reality and to the national legal framework; and upon acceptance by a qualified majority of the municipal assembly. The result of this process will be the adoption of a Local Charter-Agenda in each signatory municipality.

In the current situation of economic crisis and a possible reduction in rights, the *Charter-Agenda* is a tool for local governments to build more inclusive, democratic and solidarity-based societies in dialogue with urban dwellers. At its meeting in Mexico City in November 2010, the UCLG Executive Bureau recommended the adoption of the Charter-Agenda to the World Council, which will meet in Florence, Italy on 11 December 2011.



In this context, the UCLG Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights is organising a round table with representatives from various cities to discuss the following questions:

- What role do local governments play in guaranteeing human rights?
- By means of which policies do they contribute to implementing them?
- How useful are human rights charters in fostering the right to the city?
- What mechanisms can be implemented to supervise the application of human rights at a local level?

PROGRAM

17h – 17:10h

Presentation by **Patrick Braouezec**, First Vice President of the Social Inclusion Committee and President Plaine Commune, France

17:10h – 18h

Speakers

- **William Rono**, Mayor of Eldoret, Kenya
- **Lydia Rivera**, City Manager of Caguas, Puerto Rico
- **Giovanni Allegretti**, Scientific Vice Director of the UCLG *Inclusive Cities Observatory*, CES - University of Coimbra (Portugal)

Moderator: Magali Giovannangeli, Vice President of the Social Inclusion Committee and President of Pays d'Aubagne et l'Étoile, France

18:10h – 18:25h

Debate

- Members of the UCLG Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights
- Members of the UCLG World Council
- Representatives from other UCLG committees
- Other cities or institutions

18:25h – 18:30h

Closing by **Patrick Braouezec**, First Vice President of the Social Inclusion Committee and President Plaine Commune, France