WELCOME

Dear colleagues,

As of this moment, and every three months, the executive technical secretariat of the Committee will be sending you this newsletter with information on activities. As we have mentioned on various occasions, it is vital to establish some more frequent and effective communication guidelines between the members of the Committee. This moment is the best: our volume of activities, as well as our increasing influence in the heart of UCLG is now very important, and will continue to increase in the future, given the importance of social inclusion policies in the cities of the world. In this sense, the global economic crisis helps strengthening our commitment with social policies promoted by local governments.

Therefore, this newsletter must become a useful information point that gives our activities a greater visibility and prestige, and allow us to exchange opinions with other members. I strongly encourage you all to read it with interest and to come up with any suggestions you may consider necessary.

Yours sincerely,

Ricard Gomà, Deputy Mayor for Social Action and Citizenship of the City Hall of Barcelona and Chair of UCLG Committee on Social Inclusion

LET’S BUILD THE INCLUSIVE CITIES OF THE 21ST CENTURY

The Social Inclusion Committee has played a lead role in preparing a political document on social inclusion that is the steering force for the promotion of inclusion policies within the framework of UCLG. This document, named “Let’s build the inclusive cities of the 21st Century” was approved on November 31 by the UCLG World Council at its meeting in Istanbul.

This document defines social inclusion policies as a way of building an active citizenship and establishing the practice of participatory democracy; as a means of articulating the goals to achieve equality with the values of diversity and identity; and as a framework for the safeguard of human rights.

All of this was discussed in depth in a plenary session on social inclusion at the World Council. This debate was chaired by the mayor of Barcelona, Mr. Jordi Hereu, with the participation of the mayors of Istanbul, Guarulhos, Jericho, Montevideo and Pixley ka seme, as well as the deputy mayor of Barcelona, Mr. Ricard Gomà.

The Social Inclusion Committee, together with the Committee of City Diplomacy that presented the Hague Declaration for approval, has been a pioneer in promoting a political stance on any given topic throughout the organization.
The document is available through the following link: “Let’s build the inclusive cities of the 21st Century”

The next Committee meeting will be held this autumn in Reggio Emilia (Italy), in the framework of the Annual Conference of the International Observatory on Participatory Democracy.

We invite you to look up the work documents and the minutes of the 2008 2nd Biannual Meeting:
- Work documents
- Minutes of the meeting

8TH FORUM OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES

At the same time as the 9th World Social Forum (WSF), on January 31st the 8th World Assembly of the Local Authorities Forum took place in Belém. The Assembly was preceded by a Constitutive Assembly for a new network, the Amazon Local Authorities Forum, created to promote the integration of the Amazon-Andean region through alliances with social movements.

Both these meetings were attended by over 100 local authorities from around the world, who met to discuss on how cities can contribute to make the motto “another world is possible” come true. The workshops organized within the framework of the 8th Forum of Local Authorities were based on the following topics: environment and territorial articulation; participatory democracy and decentralization; social inclusion and the right to the city; decentralized cooperation, solidarity and peace; public services and supportive metropolises.

2ND ANNUAL COMMITTEE MEETING 2008

The Committee held its second 2008 meeting in the framework of the Istanbul World Council on November 29th. This meeting, which was attended by a large number of cities and institutions, was co-chaired by Barcelona and Guarulhos and vice-chaired by the Province of Milan and Ecatepec de Morelos. The debates focused on discussing the establishment of the Social Inclusion Observatory, the project for the Word Charter-Agenda for Human Rights in the City, the 8th Forum of Local Authorities and the articulation with the International Observatory on Participatory Democracy.

The Committee members unanimously acknowledged the importance behind the approval by the governing bodies of UCLG of the document “Let’s build the inclusive cities of the 21st Century” and made several proposals to ensure it is disseminated.
As is usual in the FAL meetings, the Committee on Social Inclusion actively collaborated in preparing this meeting; it organized and dynamized the workshop on “Social Inclusion and the right to the city” and was invited to take part in the opening ceremony of the FALA and LAF, where the Province of Milan and Saint Denis took part as vice-chairs of the Committee, respectively.

The workshop on “Social inclusion and the right to the city” was attended by local government representatives, NGOs and university institutions from Africa (Angola and Guinea Bissau), Latin America (Brazil, Nicaragua and Mexico), and Europe (Spain and France). The starting point for the debate were the conclusions reached at a previous meeting that took place within the WSF on the right to the city and the political document “Let’s build the inclusive cities of the 21st Century”. This made it possible to stress the relevance of local inclusion policies in order to safeguard human rights and a proposal promoted by the Committee was debated: the World Charter-Agenda for Human Rights in the City.

The 8th World Assembly of the Forum of Local Authorities ended with the reading of the Belém Commitment that gathers the conclusions of the 5 workshops that were held.

The Belém Commitment can be downloaded in Spanish from the website of the Forum of Local Authorities. The document will soon be available in other languages.

AGENDA

8 March
International Women’s Day

16 – 22 March
World Water Forum
Istanbul

17 – 19 March
1st International Forum on Diversity and Interculturality
Cordoba

18 – 20 March
International event on Participatory Democracy, Decentralization and Local Development
Dominican Republic

17 April
International Food Sovereignty Day

1 - 4 June
UCLG Executive Bureau
Copenhagen

THE MAYOR OF BOBIGNY CATHERINE PEYGE OPENED THE WORKSHOP