

HLPF 2020

Accelerated Action and Transformative Pathways: Realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development.

UCLG Contribution - Theme 6: Bolstering local action to accelerate implementation

As urbanization is increasingly acknowledged as one of the megatrends that are shaping the future of our societies, there exists a growing consensus in the international community that it is in urban areas where the opportunities to reinforce resilience strategies and to achieve the transition towards low-carbon societies are highest, and so are the opportunities to facilitate access to economic opportunities, improve social inclusion and advance cultural diversity and rights-based agendas that put people at their center. Well-planned cities, peri-urban areas and improved links with their hinterlands can equally contribute to reshaping urban and rural interactions by adopting a more balanced approach that tackles increasing urban and territorial inequalities and promotes more balanced systems of cities.¹

Although harnessing the potential of urban areas to promote sustainable development appears to be decisive in reaching the global agendas, the current reality of many cities is particularly challenging. More often than not, cities and their local governments are constrained by structural drivers and systems of powers, and, in many countries, by limited capacities and resources with which to respond to unsustainable urbanization patterns. Nevertheless, without definite policy interventions, the population increases expected to take place in urban areas over the next 30 years and the consequent impact on the environment will be greater than any seen before in human history. The recovery of the COVID 19 crisis, the negative impact of which on employment is even worse than the 2008 recession, will also determinate how much the world will progress or regress in the eradication of poverty for 2030. Poverty is increasingly urban and forecasted urban growth translates into 85 million more urban dwellers per year.

Despite the fact that the limited availability of disaggregated and localized indicators makes it very difficult to measure the progress achieved in urban areas to reach the SDGs, a strong contrast can generally be observed between cities in the Global North and the Global South.² While in the former different sources indicates that cities are making progress, even if more efforts will be needed to achieve many of the SDG targets,³ in the latter -with few exceptions- progress is modest and some setbacks can be observed.⁴

To contribute to the debate, this paper highlight some examples of frontrunner cities and local governments in different continents are emerging as innovative hubs to promote new urban development paths, harnessing the transformative forces of urbanization and leading the 'localization' of the global agendas. The COVID 19 crisis also brought cities to the forefront, stepping up to help their communities and elaborating the responses to the crisis that will constitute building blocks towards a "new normal". Indeed, innovative cities are putting forward a wide range of initiatives to address the many dimensions of urban sustainable development, focusing mostly on the interlinkages between access to public services, poverty, social inclusion, economic development and environmental protection, with direct and indirect impacts on the safeguarding of many of humanity's common goods. City networks and particularly the forces gathered around the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments play a key role in propelling city-to-city exchanges and supporting the localization of the global agendas, as well as in ensuring partnership between subnational governments an international institutions, UN agencies and other stakeholders.⁵

1) Inclusive planning: How can transparent urban planning and design help in creating inclusive access to housing, basic services and infrastructure, environmental sustainability, improved air and water quality, and healthier communities?

The return of planning to policy has been accelerated by the framework created by the global agendas under the assumption that it can initiate and drive change towards sustainability.⁶ As a key responsibility of local governments, urban planning is an entrance point to support urban transformations by fostering stronger citizen participation and adequate collaborative governance. These are key determinants for cities to drive the needed coalitions of forces to meet the SDGs and realize the added value of sustainable urbanization.

However, globalization processes are reshaping urban space and urban economies, for instance by mainstreaming the dominance of ‘financial rationality’ and commodification of urban assets, while new technologies trigger systemic transformations of labour and real-estate markets – all of which have a serious impact on urban planning modalities and on sustainability. Social and economic polarization within cities and between metropolitan areas and intermediary cities, as well as between integrated and peripheral cities (i.e. cities in declining zones) are growing.⁷

An important stimulus to positive reforms and cultural change in planning came during the past decades in the form of more strategic and integrated planning, promoting integrated development by combining urban policies with economic development, inclusive policies and management strategies.⁸ Metropolitan cities in particular are increasingly emphasizing the importance of strategic planning to address the fragmentation of urban services, as well as harnessing the potential of a more comprehensive urban design to manage sprawl, public space and social fragmentation, yet with contrasting results. Intermediary cities are calling to develop basic services as the backbone of localization, and for natural resources to be understood as the heritage of humanity and for their use and preservation to consider future generations and territorial cohesion. Globally, urban sprawl continues to expand and public space to shrink, albeit with many contrasts between regions.

At the same time, cities leading the localization of the global sustainable agendas are revisiting their policies and development plans to include the SDGs as a reference framework in all continents (e.g. Bogotá, Cape Town, Copenhagen, Melbourne, New York and Surabaya among many others). The processes of aligning cities’ plans with the SDGs have been effective at breaking down existing silos, encouraging collaboration through consultative processes in cities and fostering sustainable paths (see box 1 in Annex).⁹ Following similar approaches, more than thirty cities have developed Voluntary Local Reviews in all continents, showcasing the processes of integrating the SDGs and other global agendas in their plans and policies and the progress made in doing so (see Box 2, Annex).

Nevertheless, in many countries, particularly in less economically developed ones, cities’ capacities and tools to implement adequate planning to promote sustainable development paths are deficient or non-existent. As shown by UN Habitat’s and local government organizations’ analyses, cities face numerous barriers when using conventional urban management and planning.¹⁰ Planning tools need to be linked and backed up by appropriate financial and legal frameworks. The dominance of informality further determines the capacity of local institutions to steer urban development. It calls for a transformation of the approach to urban planning that allows cities to benefit from alternative ‘not formal’ modalities created by communities in their neighbourhoods.

The housing crisis and access to basic services

The expansion of informal settlements is, indeed, one of the most salient issues related to urban development, particularly in African, Asian and Latin-American countries. Although the share of the total population living in slums slightly decreased in the last decade, the absolute number of people living in informally continues to increase (1 billion people, 50% of which located in the Asian region). A critical urgency in territories like Sub-Saharan Africa, where over 50% of the urban population lives in slums, is to develop new planning modalities and capacities to accommodate more than half a million new urban dwellers per week in the coming decades, avoiding 'slumification' processes and ensuring the respect of slum dwellers' human rights.

As part of their planning and policy efforts, local governments are developing more inclusive schemes for slum and neighbourhood renovation or upgrading, supporting in many cases communities-led initiatives.¹¹ Cities are implementing incremental upgrading supported by national and local partnerships (e.g. Thailand) and, in many countries, revisiting land-titling procedures (Brazil, Peru, South Africa, although the procedure depends often on national agencies). Local governments' responses to informal settlements increasingly tend towards in-situ upgrading developing a great range of alternatives (cooperatives, community and social housing production) or to provide alternative accommodation involving communities in the decision-making process (e.g. Badia East in Lagos). However, there are still cases where settlements face eviction. Forward-thinking and policy innovation are needed in this domain so as to not leave any one behind.

Furthermore, ensuring populations' **right to adequate housing** is increasingly prominent in many local governments' agendas as a means to address the multifaceted global housing crisis facing our cities and territories. City leaders from both economically developing and developed countries, launched a global initiative to advance their populations' right to housing (see box 3, Annex). Cities are increasingly imposing rent regulations, taxing vacant properties and taking initiatives to expand the offer of social housing (including for households at the lowest parts of the income spectrum). Nevertheless, action stemming from the territories in this particular field is still far from the scale needed given the magnitude of the housing crisis and stronger multilevel cooperation is needed.

The challenge posed by addressing COVID-19 in informal settlements is highly complex, as most of the policy responses that are being adopted to curb the virus' spread in formal contexts are not applicable in informal ones. Cities, such as Freetown, developed strategies to respond to the virus based on their experience against other pandemics such as Ebola. These strategies consist on ensuring improved access to water, sanitation and food provision, while also establishing clear information flows and fostering community ownership to reach the most vulnerable populations and increase awareness and co-responsibility.¹²

Given the multi-dimensional nature of poverty in cities, planning and inclusive social policies to support the universal access to basic public services are at the core the 2030 Agenda. Most of these services are a direct or shared responsibility of city governments, although national government policies and support are also essential. While the access to piped water has overall improved at the global level, challenges remain in many cities, and particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia where access is still limited (with a setback in Sub-Saharan African urban areas: 67% of households had access to piped water in 2003 and 56% in 2019, while only 11% of the population has access to sewer connections).¹³ However, investments are dramatically lagging behind (see below). In the face of increasing water stress, many cities are developing renewed water management strategies based on integrated approaches, while others are innovating to overcome sanitation challenges (e.g. decentralized wastewater treatment systems). To face the negative impact on service accessibility and affordability related to outsourcing services, some cities and communities are seeking alternatives by bringing (back) in-house essential public services through a

process referred to as “(re)municipalization” (e.g. 1408 such cases listed since 2000, involving 2,400 cities in 58 countries).¹⁴

With regard to **public transport**, many policy instruments are within local governments’ jurisdiction.¹⁵ These competences include the regulation of road safety, cycle and walking paths, bus rapid transit schemes, traffic-free zones, ‘car-free days’, congestion pricing schemes, and shared-mobility platforms to reduce reliance on private transport. In the Global North, cities have long been developing intermodal transportation means and integrated public transport systems that combine several modalities and run on renewable energies, such as bus, metro, tramway, rail, soft mobility (i.e. biking and walking).¹⁶ In the Global South, in Africa for example, the rapid growth of cities has created a very fragmented public transport system with, in general, weak public infrastructures and often unsafe, inadequate roads. Nevertheless, Transit-oriented development (TOD) solutions and Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans are being increasingly implemented to promote more integrated urban transport systems that include distant and deprived neighborhoods into the formal economic fabric (e.g. Medellín’s Metrocable). Good practices are spreading to reinforce public transportation (bus rapid transport systems have so far been established in 172 cities¹⁷), as well as to promote the use of more sustainable public transport modes (conversion of buses to biogas, electric urban vehicles, bike lines, etc).¹⁸ However, only half of urban residents (53%) have convenient access to public transport. Following the Global Mobility Report and UITP, only doubling the share of public transport usage worldwide and increasing walking and cycling habits would it be possible to decouple urban mobility growth from growth in its societal and environmental costs.¹⁹

During the COVID 19 crisis, local governments are playing a critical role in ensuring that essential public services are maintained at an adequate level and that both formal and informal workers are able to continue subsiding despite the strong restrictions in place to prevent, so as to prevent the COVID-19 crisis from dramatically exacerbating their vulnerabilities. Cities all over the world took initiatives to find solutions for homeless people, halts evictions, expand water and sanitation coverage, provide food and health materials such as face masks and gloves, maintain public transport, allowing for deferrals in utility bills of basic services, and to some extent, offer rent or economic support. Many city governments are using the opportunity to go beyond temporary solutions, aiming to build the resilience of informal settlements.

Policies for environmental sustainability and resilience

Cities’ planning policies are also being implemented in order to co-create fairer, more inclusive and environmentally sustainable territories to reduce urban ecological footprints. It is acknowledged worldwide that an important number of **cities have been at the forefront of climate action**. In 2019, more than 10,000 cities from 138 countries made a commitment to take measurable climate action through the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy (see box 4). The most ambitious local governments committed to targets regarding zero-emission transportation means, the use of 100% renewable energy, net-zero carbon buildings and zero-waste by 2030, while also pledging to implement these goals in an equitable and inclusive manner.²⁰

In order to achieve these goals, cities are gradually taking actions to **accelerate the energetic transition towards clean and affordable energy**, for example increasing the energy efficiency of public equipment, as well as of buildings, heating and transport systems through urban renewal programmes. Many cities are developing different renewable energies, divesting from fossil fuels (e.g. Copenhagen), or supporting the transition towards renewable electricity by 2020 (e.g. the Australian Capital Territory). As mentioned above, many cities are also making **efforts to develop cleaner and more inclusive mobility systems**.

Air pollution remains a critical problem in many cities in all continents (9 out of 10 urban residents breathe polluted air).²¹ An increasing number of cities are developing tools for monitoring **air pollution and adopting Action Plans for Air Quality**. Reducing urban pollution also requires adequate urban planning and upgrading infrastructures and services.²² Cities in the Global South are promoting the use of modern cooking fuels and renewable energy to reduce indoor and outdoor air pollution (e.g., Dakar's Territorial Climate Energy Plan to reduce pollution). City networks such as *CitieswithNature* promote that nature is fully integrated into urban planning and development, to **protect biodiversity** and the **'re-naturing' of cities**.²³

Waste management strategies also rank high on local agendas.²⁴ While in high-income countries almost 100% of waste is collected and between 95% and 100% is under controlled disposal, in low-income countries, the median collection coverage is still around 50%.²⁵ Cities are increasingly committed to significantly reduce waste generation by fostering 3R principles (reduce, reuse and recycle). They are increasingly moving away from landfill and incineration practices to promoting instead the capture and use of landfill gases to transform waste to energy and adopting zero-plastic policies, taxes and fees (usually based on the 'polluter pays' principle). As part of their waste management strategies, many cities in developing countries are increasingly integrating informal waste-workers and communities, in an effort to adopt a holistic approach to development that promotes environmental sustainability alongside inclusiveness in the access to economic opportunities.

Moreover, cities are increasingly **mainstreaming disaster risk prevention** and climate change adaptation programmes within their urban and territorial planning. In partnership with international organizations (United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction - UNDRR, UN-Habitat Global Alliance for Urban Crises) and city networks (100 Resilient Cities, ICLEI, UCLG, C40), cities are designing and implementing more innovative and comprehensive resilience strategies. Local governments are increasingly making use of new technologies, promoting the involvement of communities and the most vulnerable populations through comprehensive bottom-up asset planning processes and mainstreaming resilience into neighborhood upgrading plans.

2. How can transparent urban and territorial planning and development support economic growth patterns which are diverse, balanced, inclusive, safe, green and sustainable?

Cities are the backbone of economic and social development in the majority of regions and their governments are often at the forefront of promoting local economic development. Decentralization and devolution processes have increased local governments' responsibilities and competences in local economic policies and local plans are important levers for the establishment of an enabling environment for sustainable growth, by promoting adequate infrastructures, technical assistance, taxing schemes and tailored policies. To elaborate local development strategies, cities facilitate partnerships with economic institutions (e.g., industrial or commerce chambers), small and medium enterprises (SMEs), universities, research centres, trade unions and social representation, fostering their mobilization and articulation. They are also exploring the possibilities convened by the green and circular economy, sharing and social economy, and an improved integration of informal economy in the urban fabric in which it develops.

To keep the pace of new economic cycles, moreover, many cities have been adapting their plans to face declining industrial sectors to the needs, instruments and language of new technologies, creative industries and more sustainable manufactures. They support small and medium enterprise clusters (from traditional artisanship to high-tech development), as well as the creation of business incubators.²⁶

Cities were integrating **green and circular economy** policies in their plans even before the adoption of the 2030 Agenda,²⁷ in different continents fostering renewable energy initiatives²⁸, greening urban spaces, and developing city-wide strategies to strategies such as maintenance, sharing, reusing, redistribution,

remanufacturing, recycling or recovery.²⁹ There are countless examples of cities and communities that have developed **sustainable tourism** strategies as important engines of their local development.³⁰ However, as a result of the present COVID-19 crisis, many of these strategies have been critically impacted and should be revised, particularly in the case of cities in which tourism was a key driver of economic activity.

The **sharing and collaborative economy** is being increasingly supported in cities in all regions to promote solidarity, participation and inclusive involvement³¹ (see box 5, in annex). On the other hand, many cities are taking initiatives to better regulate these activities, so as to ensure their fiscal compliance and the respect of worker's rights. The **social economy** also emerges as an alternative for inclusion as "a fundamental vector for social cohesion, a more equitable distribution of wealth and the protection of the values of sustainability, equality, equity and participation" (see box 5, Annex).³²

In other urban contexts, especially in developing countries, the **informal economy** plays a critical role too. ILO estimates that at least two billion workers (61% of the world's estimated working population) are part of the informal economy, with little or no access to social protections.³³ While many local governments have taken an ambiguous stance with regard to informal activities, focusing on the downsides of non-transparent fiscal impact and lack of work safety and rights, several cities have already made important progress in the recognition of their informal economies to better integrate informal workers in the urban fabric.³⁴

Cities and regions are valuing the role of the informal economy in the recovery phase of the pandemic, in particular in the midst of the COVID-19 outbreak, with cities such as **Subang Jaya** working with small traders during the pandemic, and the cities of **Cali** and **Freetown** working with informal communities to raise awareness about the pandemic and working to include these communities in the recovery phase, as a means to achieve a new normality.

3. Which kinds of policies, plans, governance, investments and partnerships can help create transparent, inclusive, healthier and safer cities and communities that are able to withstand destabilizing effects of negative social phenomena, such as corruption, drug and illicit firearms trafficking and terrorism, unregulated migration, lack of access to public goods, widespread public protests etc.?

The development of healthy and safer cities remains inextricably linked with the improvement of the quality of life, the prevention of risks and the reduction of violence. Poverty and inequalities exacerbate risks and often serve as an instigator of urban violence, which is on the rise in many cities around the world and becoming a key determinant in the governance of cities and metropolises in Latin America, North America and Africa. These include violence stemming from exclusionary processes, interpersonal violence, hate crimes and organized crime, aggravated by corruption that undermines social trust in public institutions.

The current COVID-19 crisis has highlighted the critical dimensions of inequalities and the role cities governments need to play in ensuring the social assistance for the more in need, elderly populations, people with disabilities, the homeless, and supporting access to food and shelter for vulnerable and "invisible" communities

Many cities are trying to build trust through security initiatives based on new surveillance technologies, but also developing inclusive social policies associated with the respect of diversity and human rights. Policies include campaigns to raise public awareness or to foster the involvement of local stakeholders in preventive policies, as well as policies to improve responsive health initiatives (including more integrated

approaches to drug-users) and to train the local police - by involving them with local communities in the management and reduction of violence, developing mediation to solve conflicts and providing social assistance.³⁵³⁶

As part of their efforts to strengthen people's confidence in local institutions, cities' governments are choosing to mainstream **rights-based approaches** into their development strategies to tackle all forms of discrimination and support diversity and social inclusion (e.g., women, people in extreme poverty, youth, elderly, minorities, LGBTQIA+ populations, persons with disabilities and immigrants). Cities propelled the 'Right to the city' as a principle in the Habitat III Agenda and more recently, more than 400 mayors from all regions signed the Global Charter-Agenda for Human Rights in the City and implemented awareness-raising campaigns, education programmes, created human rights commissions and offices, ombudsperson or *mediateurs*.³⁷

Cities are mainstreaming gender-specific approaches to urban management and policy-making, through programmes to promote equality for women and girls including those aimed at increasing respect for equal rights, reducing discriminative policies, addressing gender violence in public and collective space, such as in parks or on public transport, domestic violence as well as harassment in schools and acknowledging women's role in the informal economy.³⁸ (see box 6, in annex)

Cities are also addressing the protection of **immigrants**, with the creation of Sanctuary Cities in USA (more 500 jurisdictions), Solidarity Cities and Refuge-Cities to welcome refugees and asylum seekers in Europe (more than 80 cities and towns) and 'Cities and Regions for Integration' (launched in 2019 by the European Committee of Regions). In December 2018, the Marrakech Declaration of Mayors at the Mayoral Forum 2018 acknowledged the role of cities in the global governance of migration and look on enhancing the role given to them in the process of defining and implementing the Global Compact for Migration. Jordanian, Greek, Lebanese and Turkish municipalities coped with a large influx of migrants and refugees fleeing from the war in Syria, with relatively limited resources. However, despite these efforts, the magnitude of migratory crises, such as those currently taking place in the Mediterranean or Central America, mean that cooperative efforts still need be greatly strengthened at all levels.

Linking urban planning to citizen participation is progressively contributing to systemic changes.

Worldwide, many cities have institutionalized different forms of citizen, private sector and community participation, and these modalities are being expanded as part of the localization efforts for the global agendas. Participatory planning (which is even mandatory in some countries like Dominican Republic) and participatory budgeting, among other modalities of citizen participation (i.e. referendums, open councils, e-participation, etc.) are becoming essential practices, enhancing ownership and accountability. Open Government practices and E-democracy has also transformed participation in the past two decades, via more transparency and accountability mechanisms that support citizen involvement in different stages of decision making (e.g. 'Smart Citizen', 'Digital Civics', etc).³⁹

Participatory and rights-based approaches are developing a new framework for the 'co-creation' of cities and territories for services delivery and urban designs.⁴⁰ The notion of participation, however, is not a panacea *per se*. Participatory budget experiments, for example, span along a broad spectrum: from symbolic participatory gestures with little transformative impact, to vectors of structural change in cities' governance systems, addressing different groups (youth, homeless, minorities, migrants, etc.) and with different amounts allocated to participatory budgets.⁴¹ **The concept of participation is changing, moving beyond simple consultation, to the co-creation of a space that will contribute to rebalancing the distribution of decision-making powers in society.**

4. **What is the role of science, technology, communication and innovation in the transformation to sustainable and equitable urban systems, which also incorporate and address informality and help overcome the digital divide?**

New technologies have played a major innovation role in fostering territorial competitiveness and growth. Most research and innovation takes place in cities where technological clusters are located, giving rise to new economic models. Cities and local governments of all sizes across continents are devoting increasing efforts to harness new technologies to allow for a more efficient use of resources and urban governance advancements that increase populations' life quality.

This is illustrated by the growth of 'smart city' solutions, open government initiatives and other strategies involving their citizens to foster innovation, such as urban labs or hackathons, to name a few. New technologies are increasingly being used in public administration to enhance the accessibility of services and public information, such as tax systems or public procurement. They are also being used to improve the efficiency of public services (i.e. monitoring and reducing waste, energy and water consumption through smart grids, meters, etc), mobility (traffic sensors, passengers flow), as well as in many other areas (health services, education, etc). More advanced cities are integrating city data that comes from sensors, microphones, cameras, social networks or websites, to generate connections that nurture simulations and prevention models for better management of the city. These include population density analysis for the planning of public spaces or the monitoring of information in real time for the prevention of recurrent events.

Innovations that influence urban design, policymaking and infrastructure can potentially facilitate the integration of urban systems and lead to more inclusive and sustainable outcomes. Yet they also have policy implications including many challenges, risks and trade-offs with wide-ranging impacts on people's privacy, work conditions, local small business, public transportation systems or tax evasion, among others.

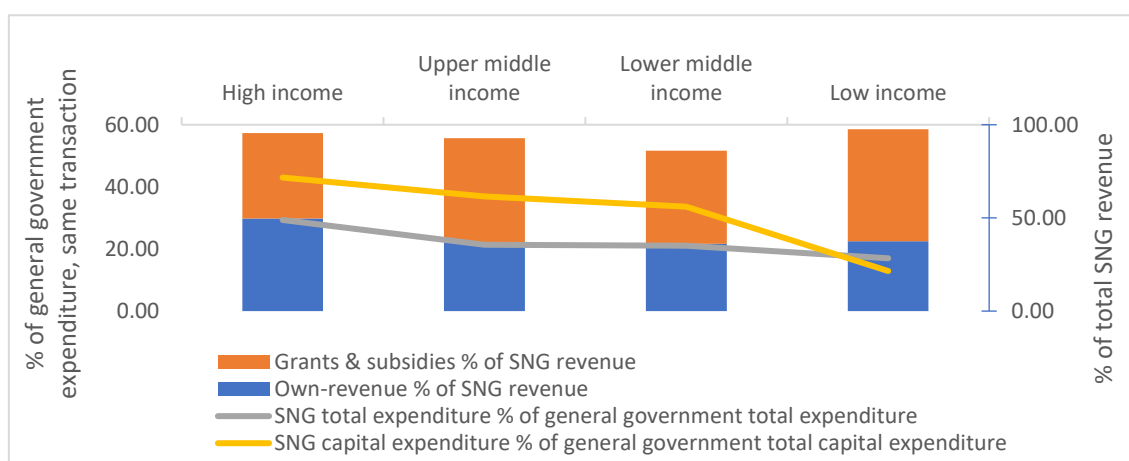
While adopting and facilitating the exchange of innovative experiences, cities must also address the multifaceted impacts of new technologies, including the increasing digital divide between people, cities and territories, the need to respect privacy rights, and the use of big data for public services to be considered as a common good that needs to be protected (e.g. Coalition of Cities for Digital Rights).⁴² Many cities have created municipal offices to promote innovation while also striving for security, privacy and the ethical management of the information through a more efficient, transparent and democratic system. In this sense, Open Government initiatives, for example, are fostering the use of technology to support transparency and accountability, open data generation and opportunities for citizen participation. These initiatives contribute to driving organizational change, involving promoting adequate regulatory frameworks, the dissemination of technological tools and the creation of spaces for the co-creation of policies.⁴³

In the midst of the COVID-19 outbreak, cities are working to bridge the digital divide, as tele-education and working-from-home measures are now a critical aspect of our daily lives. The rise of digital technologies is also showcasing the trade-off between public health and emergency needs, with cities such as **Barcelona**, or **Milan** working to develop approaches to digital rights to ensure that this dichotomy is broken.

5. How can local and national governments work together to ensure adequate resources are available for sustainable, inclusive, safe and transparent urban development? How can local government financing be made more predictable and robust?

Since the 1980s, a majority of countries have implemented decentralisation processes that have culminated in locally elected governments being in charge of the management of cities and territories and of the delivery of main services to respond to local communities' needs. Local and regional governments play an increasingly significant role in urban governance: on global average they represent 24.1% of general government public spending, 25.7% of general government public revenue, and 36.6% of general government public investment.⁴⁴ Figure 1 below shows the structure of local and regional governments ("subnational governments") finance according to their country's income levels.

Figure 1. Sub-national own revenue/transfer ratio compared to the volume of expenditure (total and capital) by income groups



Source: OECD-CGLU (2019) World Observatory on Subnational Governments Finances and Investments – Data base (<http://www.sng-wofi.org/data/>) [Extracted from GOLD V report, p.385]

Notwithstanding the overall –albeit uneven– progress of decentralization, financing remains the dimension where progress is globally more bounded, raising several paradoxes. One is that cities concentrate around 80% of global GDP, but many rapidly growing cities fail to capture the wealth created and continue to struggle with insufficient budgets and accumulate infrastructure deficits.⁴⁵ Across all regions, there is a critical mismatch between the increase of transferred responsibilities and the revenues allocated to local governments. Effective financial empowerment of local governments for the achievement of the SDGs and the NUA is the commitment corresponding to paragraph 34 of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda adopted by UN Members States. However, this is far from reality.

In all regions, yet particularly in less economically developed countries, the cumulative shortfall in financing sustainable development is a critical problem. The challenge is most acute where urbanization is expected to concentrate, as in Sub-Saharan Africa and South/South-Eastern Asian countries. At the local level, from a sustainable development perspective, under the current projections, most cities will not be able to raise the finance required to meet the infrastructure demand. **Reforms that improve the rationality of assigned powers, capacities and resources to local governments are one of the most critical dimensions that can boost urban governance.**

Adequate local fiscal systems need to adopt an incremental approach based on a dynamic and buoyant local tax system, including environmental taxes (“polluter pays” principle) and carbon pricing. Cities need to strengthen land management to better capture land added values to reinvest in local infrastructures. Likewise, transfers from the national level to local governments, including equalization grants, should redistribute a fairer share of national fiscal revenues to allow cities to deliver quality public services, ensuring transparency and accountability. Inter-municipal cooperation needs to be better supported by fair fiscal systems that foster cooperation between municipalities to avoid tax competition, particular in metropolitan areas. Moreover, borrowing frameworks and regulations should facilitate responsible loans and access to markets adapted to cities’ levels of financial maturity. Although formally allowed, borrowing is in practice strictly limited for a majority of local governments especially in developing countries. A global study identified only 22 countries where municipalities are allowed to borrow without so restrictive controls.⁴⁶

The progress seen in the different regions over the past few decades in the decentralization processes, have led to a more complex political institutional landscape and the need to enhance **multilevel governments collaboration**. At the same time, the transcendental transformation of the urban landscape –with the expansion of borderless metropolitan areas and urban regions as well as the expanding role of intermediary cities and peri-urban areas– poses incremental challenges to both local and national urban governance. The evolution of the institutional frameworks needed to enable effective multilevel governance varies widely: while some countries have long-standing structures for dialogue and collaboration between central and local governments, others have more incipient or not well developed multilevel governance mechanisms. Some countries have implemented better integrated planning and national mechanisms to foster SDGs harmonized sectoral policies involving different levels of government, while others still face national SDG strategies with poor or ill-defined localization policies.⁴⁷

The implementation of the 2030 Agenda undoubtedly represents an opportunity to strengthening and expanding institutional collaboration. Multilevel governance arrangements are instrumental for the effective localization of the global agendas, as well as for creating synergies, reducing overlapping and critical gaps between institutions and promoting trust and accountability that enhance policy coherence. Well-tailored multilevel governance arrangements can facilitate the involvement of local institutions and actors, and create local ownership, while fostering innovation and experimentation that allows for the adapting of national strategies to local realities, **based on the principle of subsidiarity and the respect for local autonomy**.⁴⁸

On this regard **National Urban Policies (NUPs)**, considered as ‘a coherent set of decisions through a deliberate government-led process of coordinating and rallying various stakeholders to maximize the benefits of urbanization’, are a critical part of the process of building multilevel governance systems, as recognized in the New Urban Agenda.⁴⁹

There is still a long way to go to achieve the effective transformation of urban governance. Many urban areas suffer from inadequate multilevel governance schemes, unclear distributions of responsibilities between different spheres of government and weak cooperative mechanisms. It is also worth noting that the participation of local governments in the national coordination mechanisms for SDGs implementation is still limited and their involvement varied in the definition and development of National Urban Policies.⁵⁰ Such ineffective multi-level governance systems compromise planning processes and hinder the engagement with civil society and key stakeholders. **An enabling legal and institutional environment in which cities governments can fulfil their responsibilities, innovate and capitalize on their resources, as**

well as access adequate financing, is imperative to bolster local actions that will catalyze sustainable national development processes.

6. How can urban, peri-urban and rural areas be connected through infrastructure that is resilient and integrated with transparent, urban and territorial development plans, focusing on access, affordability, inclusivity, resource-efficiency and innovation?

Spurred by growing opportunities, enhanced communication and available technologies, rural, urban and growing peri-urban environments are increasingly integrated and interdependent:⁵¹ labour and trade markets are increasingly shared, common resources are pooled for the provision of basic services, and both the rural and urban contexts are aware to an unprecedented degree of the need to preserve environmental resources and cooperate for sustainable production and increasing resilience (e.g. to floods, droughts, etc.). In other words, rural-urban linkages, in all their diversity and comprehensiveness, are key for the long-term sustainability of regional development and the wellbeing of people. The notion of urban, peri-urban and rural partnerships starts with the recognition that these areas interact through a broad set of linkages which make them increasingly interdependent.⁵²

Rural-urban partnerships are key to sustainable territorial development, yet they are also influenced by external conditions. These include institutional factors, such as regulatory constraints and political bottlenecks; information asymmetries or a lack of cooperation among involved actors. Moreover, policy-making fragmentation can also affect the effectiveness of such partnerships. On the other hand, awareness and inclusion, a deeper understanding of the rural-urban linkages that buttress the partnership, and the promotion of democratic participation and grassroots leadership that stem from it can be factors that galvanize a partnership's positive impact on the territory. Furthermore, small towns tend to rely extensively on the financial and technical support that they receive from higher tiers of government, in particular from regional and national administrations. This has historically led observers to view small towns and rural areas as having limited capacity to develop effective and accountable local governance systems and support strong local development strategies. However, in many countries small local governments are often the crucial link in local democracy that connects public administration with people and communities in small towns and rural areas.

Rural-urban partnerships are therefore essential for mobilizing actors and stakeholders from involved communities and engaging them in the achievement of common goals and a shared vision. Galvanizing such engagement requires the development of adequate instruments for participatory planning that link urban and rural plans, as well as providing them with the necessary institutional, political and economic resources. Moreover, they have an important role to play in the governance of regional and rural-urban relations. Successful partnerships will address the effectiveness of existing policies and governance institutions and the potential benefits of these for their communities.

The global agenda for regional development will have to systematically pursue a more comprehensive territorial approach that builds on the privileged connection of rural, peri-urban and urban areas within the territory. In many regions, this approach could be central for territorial cohesion and for achieving a more balanced territorial development, core principles of the sustainable agendas. This approach can contribute to reduce increasing territorial inequalities observed in almost all regions worldwide.

For their part, local governments are advancing initiatives to reinforce cooperation between territories through inter-municipal cooperation. Examples of initiatives that aim to promote urban-rural partnerships, based on a combination of environmental, economic and socio-cultural objectives are observed in many countries. These initiatives are usually implemented through integrated strategies

that build on good governance, research and innovation and a greater role for public institutions at all levels. Forging new partnerships, fostering smart specialization that promotes the sustainable development of rural and peri-urban areas located on urban fringes can adopt many modalities. Key components usually include shared development strategies (e.g. eco-tourism), access to social services for peri-urban and rural areas, local food systems and the protection of environmental resources that are critical for urban systems (e.g. watershed management, wetland and coastal areas protections, reforestation, etc.).⁵³

UN Habitat *Urban-Rural Guiding Principles and Framework for Action* are a reference to adopt a more proactive approach to the articulation of urban, peri-urban and rural areas into the wider territory they belong to, explicitly acknowledging the fundamental importance of understanding and promoting sustainable development across the whole urban-rural continuum.

CONCLUSION

In a context of never-before seen challenges, front-running cities, visionary leaders and their organizations are contributing to bolstering local actions to ensure public service provision and accelerate SDGs implementation along many dimensions, such as the alignment of urban plans with SDGs targets, climate change mitigation, urban resilience, alternative economic models, social inclusion policies and mainstreaming human rights based approaches. They were and continue to be in the frontline during the COVID-19 crisis to ensure the continuity of essential public services and to respond to urgencies including people information and protection, access to food and transitory shelter to those more in need.

Clearly, the global movement that many cities are leading has made important progress in the last four years, yet this progress is still partial and should be reinforced. Cities can and are acting to enhance the coalescence of social transformative forces that could act as the fulcrum for local actions. In the aftermath of the pandemic crisis, they role will be also critical to build a “new normal”, contributing to the economic recovery, while exploring new modalities for public services delivery, including tackling inequalities in the intersectional way they affect people, particularly women and structurally discriminated populations, reducing digital divide and protecting the commons. It is essential to ensure that the recovery is done including the most vulnerable populations and that climate change is addressed on in the post COVID-19 world.

At the same time, in many territories, local and regional governments’ ‘enabling institutional environments’ –the powers, capacities and resources devolved–, are not fit for achieving this purpose, hindering urban governments’ capacity to expand and upscale the most ambitious and innovative actions. Despite encouraging examples, there remain important gaps between more dynamic cities and many other less economically developed and fragile cities hampered by weak local capacities and resources and inadequate national institutional frameworks.

Thus, the need is urgent to strengthen the efforts to **galvanize these forces to bolster the localization of the global agendas in cities and territories**. Localization and urban sustainable strategies should be mainstreamed in all plans, programmes and budgets from the national to the local levels. Countries need to integrate (or strengthen) robust urban and territorial policies into their sustainable development strategies and action plans to expand the involvement of local governments and actors, including stimulus packages to accelerate and upscale urban sustainable development in the framework of the recovery process.

Sustainable participative urban land planning are critical to harness the co-creation of cities and bolster local actions. An integrated planning approach, as reflected in the SDG 11.3 (and the New Urban Agenda), is imperative to strengthen the inclusive dimension of cities, putting citizens’ rights and gender equality

at the center, strengthening climate adaptation and resilience strategies and multiplying the benefits of existing interlinkages between urban and territorial areas. Urgent actions to boost urban planning are more urgently needed in regions where rapid urban growth will be concentrated (Sub-Saharan Africa and South and South-East Asia)

A new culture of participation, based on the recognition of citizens' rights, should promote an increasing number of participatory processes in cities that manage to engage organized civil society in all its forms and that pays special attention to structurally discriminated groups including women, the youth, the elderly, people with disabilities, vulnerable minorities and the urban poor, among others. Virtual participation, data gathering, and the development of artificial intelligence should be used for the common good and people rights guaranteed with involvement of communities and at the service of democratic societies. Cultural sector will need special attention to facilitate the recognition of diversity and creativity.

To harness the transformative potential of cities' and local stakeholder's involvement, countries should ensure an **enabling institutional environment for cities governments**, through **effective decentralization policies** that empower cities governments to act in a more developmental and sustainable way.

As part of the empowerment of local governments, special attention should be given to **fiscal decentralization and adequate financing flows to support urban investments**, as acknowledged by the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (paragraph 34). An International Municipal/Territorial Relief Fund can unlock access to funds for both emergency and reconstruction.

It is also of great importance to create strong **multilevel governance frameworks to strengthen collaborative approaches**, built around institutionalized mechanisms for cooperation and coordination, enshrined in broad consultative processes based on the principles of subsidiarity and decentralisation, as well as the adequate intergovernmental allocation of financial resources.

The effective involvement of local governments and stakeholders is critical to **strengthen a "whole of government" and a "whole of society" approaches**. At the national level, there is much to do in terms of effectively involving local governments and stakeholders in the national coordination mechanisms for the implementation of the SDGs, as well as in terms of strengthening their involvement in the definition, implementation and monitoring of National Urban Policies. Limited consultations and uncoordinated decision-making presently hinder the policy coherence necessary to achieve and reduce local ownership.

The **production and dissemination of disaggregated data for monitoring, evaluation and impact evaluation at the city level** are necessary to ensure that planning processes are founded on realistic targets and that effective implementation can be monitored, as well as to ensure accountability and citizen follow-up.

More than ever, **city to city exchange** is necessary to multiply and upscale policy lessons taking into account the realities of local contexts. National governments and international institutions have an important responsibility to support and assist local governments and their networks to multiply these exchanges and expand the localization process worldwide.

ANNEX – Selected examples

Box 1 – Seoul, Durban and Medellin: urban planning and the global agendas

Since 1995, after the first mayoral election, the Seoul Metropolitan Government (10.1 million inhabitants) has led the efforts to build a sustainable city, leading actions in many areas: participatory urban planning, new technologies, social inclusion and climate change mitigation. In 2015, the city established the Master Plan for Sustainable Development and adopted a comprehensive strategy to fight climate change—‘The Promise of Seoul, Taking Actions against Climate Change’—, which covers energy, air quality, transport, waste, ecology, urban agriculture, health, safety and urban planning.⁵⁴ In 2017, the 2030 Seoul Plan for the implementation of the SDGs was adopted using a bottom-up approach.⁵⁵ To realize the future vision, five core issues were identified: ‘people-centred city without discrimination, dynamic global city with a strong job market, vibrant cultural and historic city, lively and safe city and stable housing and easy transportation, community-oriented city’.

In eThekweni-Durban, the alignment of the 2030 Agenda with the metropolitan plan was carried out using a bottom-up approach as part of the city’s strategic approach to sustainability and has focused on four main pillars: human rights, people, the planet and prosperity.

Medellin (3 million inhabitants) was immersed in the 1990’s in a deep social and economic crisis with serious problems of exclusion and violence. In the 2000’s Medellin became a “city for life”. This success included three essential components: citizen participation, partnership between the different actors and integrated planning. Several strategic plans defined a long-term vision supported by all stakeholders (the Strategic Plan for Medellin and the Plan for the Metropolitan Area 2015 adopted in 1998, followed in 1999-2000 by the Territorial Development Plan -TDP). The planning efforts were accompanied with a process of peace and reconciliation, inclusion of poor neighbourhoods (e.g. *Mejoramiento integral de barrios*) and protection of human rights. More recently, Medellin aligned its TDP with the SDGs and the NUA.

Box 2- Voluntary Local Reviews

Over the past few years, VLRs have become a common tool for cities and territories to present outcomes and results of the localization of the SDGs in their communities. While the UN-led monitoring system is designed to engage national governments, VLRs have been a tool for local governments to contribute, share and learn. Since 2017, at least 40 Voluntary Local Reviews have been published: those of the municipalities of Kitakyushu, Toyama, Shimokawa, Hamamatsu (Japan), Barcarena, Niteroi, Santana de Parnaíba (Brazil), Barcelona, Málaga (Spain), Besançon (France), Bristol, Canterbury (United Kingdom), Buenos Aires (Argentina), Cape Town (South Africa), Gothenburg (Sweden), Helsinki (Finland), La Paz (Bolivia), Los Angeles, New York (United States), Mannheim (Germany), Mexico City (Mexico), Suwon (Republic of Korea), Taipei, New Taipei (Taiwan), more recently Chimbote (Peru) ; and those of the second-tier subnational governments (i.e., counties, provinces, regions or federated states) of the Basque Country, the Valencian Country (Spain), the province of Santa Fe (Argentina), Busia, Kwale, Marsabit, Taita Taveta (Kenya), Deqing (China), Nord Rhein-Westphalia (Germany), Oaxaca (Mexico), São Paulo (Brazil), and Wallonia (Belgium). In Africa the cities of Accra, Harare, Victoria Falls and Yaoundé, and the Ngora District in Uganda are engaged in the development of VLRs (ECA/RFSD/2020/14)

Box 3– Cities for Adequate Housing Initiative⁵⁶

The global housing crisis led cities like Amsterdam, Barcelona, Berlin, Birmingham, Buenos Aires, Durban, Geneva, Jakarta, Lisbon, London, Mexico, Medellin, Montreal, Montevideo, New York, Paris, Seoul, Strasbourg, Taipei and Vienna to bring to the 2018 High-Level Political Forum of the UN (HPFL) a firm pledge for the Right to Housing in the form of the Declaration ‘Cities for Adequate Housing’, joining the ‘Make the Shift’ initiative promoted by the UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing. A growing number of cities have committed to promoting renewed housing strategies to overcome the obstacles to the realization of the right to housing, such as the lack of national funding, market deregulation and housing commodification, the need for the co-production of affordable housing between the public and private sectors, upscaling community-driven alternative housing production and promoting urban planning that combines housing with inclusive and sustainable neighborhoods. Cities are also building multi-stakeholder alliances to facilitate access to housing (e.g. Montevideo and Bologna supporting housing cooperatives, or Brussels and New York to Community Land Trust initiatives).

Box 4. Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy (GCoM)⁵⁷

The Global Covenant of Mayors gathers over 10,000 cities from 138 countries in all continents committed to reduce, by 2030, 2,3 billion tons of CO₂ emissions. The covenant is supported by a global alliance of local government networks –C40, Climate Alliance, Eurocities, Council of European Municipalities and Regions, Energy Cities, ICLEI and UCLG– and international institutions –the European Commission, the European Committee of the Regions, UN Habitat, the European Federation of Agencies and Regions for Energy and the Environment and Bloomberg Philanthropies. GCoM members are committed to prepare a baseline emission inventory, submit a sustainable energy action plan, carry out regular reporting for evaluation, monitoring and verification purpose, and share experiences and know-how. Global networks have also promoted other actions as is for instance the case of ICLEI, which in partnership with the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) has also developed a ‘carbon Climate Registry’ to support subnational climate action reporting. Numerous networks have emerged at country and regional levels leading with climate initiatives (e.g. Climate Mayors in the USA, Climate Alliance in Europe).

Box 5. Social and Collaborative Economy⁵⁸

The sharing economy is a disruptor to nearly every sector of the economy and is challenging many established business and organizational models. Sharing innovations spread across many cities and sectors –such as mobility, accommodation, skills, agriculture, collaborative production, free-access cultural products, and many more. Sharing activities and initiatives have been particularly embraced in Canada, the United States, South Korea, and Europe. Collaborative consumption is nurturing the demand for more efficient services and on-demand information, resulting in higher levels of entrepreneurship in many areas. Cities participate in different networks to empower city governments to address the opportunities and challenges of this new economy. The Sharing Cities Alliance started in 2012 and gathers 5000+ signers of the Copenhagen letter. Their main objective is ‘to empower city governments to address the opportunities and challenges of sharing economy, to become better able in governing digital territories’. The Global social and solidarity economy (SSE) network, organized around the Global Social Economy Forum (GSEF) was created in 2013 based on the Seoul Declaration, with the aim to integrate cities and SSE institutions which recognized the need for global solidarity in the area of social economy. The GSEF launched in 2016 the International Center for Innovation and Knowledge

Transfer on the Social and Solidary Economy. Through collaboration between social economy organizations and local governments, the GSEF pursues the creation of quality jobs, fair growth, the progress of grassroots democracy and sustainable development.

Box 6 – Gender equality⁵⁹

Many actions have flourished around the world’s metropolitan areas to reduce violence against **women** or empower them to participate in the public life in order to protect women’s rights. Mainstreaming gender into public policies and actions with a gender-specific approach is paramount to achieving equal rights. In this sense, actions have been implemented in the field of urban spaces (New Dehli’s free SafetiPin app producing information on interactive maps of places where women feel unsafe and including an alarm service, now also available in Bangalore, Bogotá and Jakarta, among other cities⁶⁰); public transportation (Quito’s “Down with Harassment” project to stop harassment on public transport, implemented thanks to UN Women’s Global Flagship Initiative Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces⁶¹, or Toronto’s buses stopping at the request of women between 9pm and 5am to shorten walking distance⁶²); or awareness raising (more than 100 youth agents of change in Cairo are leading transformative activities in schools and other settings to promote respectful gender relationships, gender equality, and safety in public spaces. Similar actions are implemented in Seoul, Montreal and Barcelona).⁶³ With regards to women’s involvement in local governments, in 2017 UCLG estimated that around 20% of the world’s local councillors and 5% of its mayors were women.

Box 7. Local food systems and urban agriculture⁶⁴

In order to achieve new and sustainable modes of production and consumption, local governments and several city and regional networks have arisen in recent years, both at the national level (Sustainable Food Cities in the UK; *Red de ciudades por la Agroecología* in Spain; *Rete Città Sane* (OMS) in Italy; the Dutch City Deal: Food on the Urban Agenda; the German BioStädte network) and at European level (*Agroecocities*; ICLEI-RUAF CityFood network). One of the most meaningful initiatives is the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact; with 179 signatory cities since 2015 and 66 cities engaged in food policy city-to-city cooperation. This represents an innovative planning strategy that integrates a food cycle system that fosters reuse, recycling waste and reducing food miles through the promotion of local products. Based on the Québec Declaration of 2015, Regions France, with the support of UCLG, launched an initiative to foster a progressive reterritorialization of food systems, and improve local food production processes to protect and involve local communities, promote food security and nutrition transition.

¹ UCLG (2019), *The localization of the global agendas, GOLD V Report*, see : <https://www.gold.uclg.org/reports/other/gold-v-report>

² For example, only few indicators are reported at global level: on slums (SDG 11.1.1), persons affected and economic lost due to disasters (11.5.1, 11.5.2), solid waste collected and air pollution (11.6.1, 11.6.2), cities that

- adopted integrated plans for risk prevention (11.b.1 and 11.b.2). Source: UN Global SDG Database, SDG Indicators (<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/>)
- ³ Bertelsmann Stiftung and SDSN, *Sustainable Development Report 2019*, SDSN and Telos, *2019 SDG Index and Dashboard Report, European Cities*, Tiburg.
- ⁴ ECA (13 January 2020), *Background paper on prosperity (in reference to Sustainable Development Goals 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11)*, ECA/RFSD/2020/8; ESCAP (15 January 2020), *Five years on, where do we stand?*, ESCAP/RFSD/2020/2 and ESCAP, *Urban and peri-urban development*
- ⁵ The GTF brings together the main 25 global and regional organizations of local and regional governments. The GTF supports to the strong engagement of local leaders in the preparation of 2030 Agenda, as well in during the COP process. UCLG President, the former Mayor of Istanbul, was nominated by Ban Ki-moon as member of the High Level Panel of Eminent Personalities for the Post-2015 Agenda in 2012. For more information, visit: <https://www.global-taskforce.org/>
- ⁶ G. Bhan, S. Srinivas and V. Watson (2018). The 'International guidelines for Urban and territorial planning' recognize the political dimension of planning and its central relevance for local decision making and long term development agreements.
- ⁷ The concept of "Splintering urbanism" was developed by Stephen Graham and Simon Marvin (Routledge, 2001). See also UCLG (2016), Metropolitan chapter and Saskia Sassen, 'Who owns the city', in Ricky Burdett and Philipp Rode (2018) UN Habitat (2016). Strategic plans have flourish in cities in all regions, such, Barcelona (since the 90s), Dar-es-Salaam, Johannesburg, Lima, London, Melbourne, Nairobi, New York, Quito, Seoul, Shanghai or, Tokyo and in cities from all sizes. Strategic planning and Cities Development Strategies were also propelled by cities networks and international agencies with the aim to give a voice to residents on the future of their cities (e.g. Cities Alliance or currently by different partners, for example, the Medinatouna project in nine middle-size cities in Tunis). For Latin America see: <https://www.iadb.org/es/desarrollo-urbano-y-vivienda/programa-ciudades-emergentes-y-sostenibles>: *Programa de ciudades emergentes y sostenibles*. E.g. Belo Horizonte, Curitiba, Medellin, Mexico, Porto Alegre, Rosario, etc
- ⁹ Seoul Metropolitan Government (2018). To realize the future vision, five core issues were identified: 'people-centred city without discrimination, dynamic global city with a strong job market, vibrant cultural and historic city, lively and safe city and stable housing and easy transportation, community-oriented city'.
- ¹⁰ UN Habitat (2010) COMPLETAR CON REFERENCIAS FRANCESAS : Dominique Lorrain
- ¹¹ E.g., Rosario - Argentina, Mukuru-Kenya, Harare-Zimbabwe, Dar-es-Salam-Tanzani. See: *Mejoramiento Integral de Barrios* Project <http://isvimed.gov.co/programa/mejoramiento-integral-de-barrios>. Mukuro slum project, <https://www.iied.org/special-approach-slum-upgrading-special-planning-area-mukuru-nairobi>; David Satterthwaite, « Getting housing back onto the development agenda... », in *Environment and Urbanization* 32(1), April 2020.
- ¹² UCLG, Addressing COVID 19 in informal context, Live Learning Experience, April 29th 2020. See: <https://www.uclg.org/en/issues/live-learning-experience-beyondtheoutbreak>
- ¹³ ECA (13 January 2020), *Background paper on prosperity (in reference to Sustainable Development Goals 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11)*, ECA/RFSD/2020/8
- ¹⁴ S. Kishimoto, L. Steinfort and O.Petitjean (2019), *The Future is Public -Towards Democratic Ownership of Public Services*. The main sectors involved are : water 83119, energy (374), telecommunications (192), health (138), wasste (75), social services (75), transport (47), education (38) and different services (223).
- ¹⁵ According to the City Survey developed by the LSE's Going Green initiative, 63 percent of all policy tools used for urban mobility are implemented by city governments.
- ¹⁶ <https://www.smartcitiesworld.net/special-reports/traffic-congestion-cutting-through-the-complexity>
- ¹⁷ <https://brtdata.org/>
- ¹⁸ https://www.c40.org/case_studies/electric-urban-cleaning-vehicles-to-drive-down-city-s-ghg-emissions-save-costs-and-improve-citizens-health
- ¹⁹ See online at this address: <http://www.uitp.org/strategypublic-transport>.
- ²⁰ Chinese cities committed to reduce 318 million tonnes of CO2 equivalent per year in 2030. Asian Development Bank (November 2018), *50 Climate Solutions from Cities in the People's Republic of China*. Best Practices from Cities Taking Action on Climate Chang, Manila (Philippines), ADB. Cities such Beijing, Chengdu, Guangzhou, Hangzhou, Nanjing, Qingdao, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Wuhan and others. This include measures to conserve energy, reduce emissions, increase mass transit and non-motorized transport infrastructure, increase green infrastructure, rehabilitate wetlands, and improve flood protection.
- ²¹ UN SDG Report 2019.

- ²² Cities such as **Beijing**, for example, began to take targeted actions to control air pollution, relocating polluting industries from the urban core areas (more than 1,200 polluting plants had been removed by the end 2016).
- ²³ Launched by ICLEI, The Nature Conservancy and IUCN to share policies, plans, commitments, actions related to nature and the services of ecosystems, the network include more than 120 cities from all regions.
- ²⁴ Following the UN SDG Report 2019 still 2 billion people do not have access to waste collection services.
- ²⁵ GTF and UCLG (2018) Towards de Localization of the SDG, 2nd Report to the HLPF, p.70
- ²⁶ This paragraph and all the examples are extracted from: GTF -UCLG (2019), *Towards the Localization of the SDGs, Local and Regional Government's Report to the HLPF 2019*, pp. 67-75, where sources are quoted.
- ²⁷ UNDP (2013), Green Jobs for Women and Youth, What Can Local Governments Do?, as well as OECD (2013), Green Growth in Cities, Paris, OECD. The London School of Economics, ICLEI and GGGI (2012) carried out interviews and complementary studies in 90 cities: 94% have already developed local strategies for 'green growth (including New York, Tokyo, Berlin, Johannesburg, Buenos Aires, Melbourne, Paris and Singapore). See also: www.energy-cities.eu/IMG/pdf/local_energy_ownership_study-energycities-en.pdf. The Eastern Europe Energy Efficiency and Environment Partnership (E5P) supports projects on district heating, solid waste management, energy efficiency in public buildings in many cities. See <http://e5p.eu/> for more information
- ²⁸ Ribeira Grande (Cape Verde) has developed a photovoltaic electrification program for 140 families in rural areas, with the creation of stable jobs and tourist activities.; Rajasthan has set the goal of producing 100 GW with solar power by 2022. Queensland created CleanCo, a renewable publicly-owned energy producer. See more information at: <https://cleancoqueensland.com.au/>. For the Indian case, see: ICLEI-South Asia (2015), *Green Growth Good Practices for Indian Cities*, Delhi, India.
- ²⁹ A recent study collects 130 city-led initiatives for transition to a circular economy: C40 Cities, Climate-KIC (2018), Municipality-led Circular Economy Case Studies.
- ³⁰ See the reports "[The Relationship Between Culture and Tourism in Barcelona: Current Context and Challenges](#)" and "[Creating synergies between cultural policy and tourism for permanent and temporary citizens](#)", produced in 2017 and 2018 by the City Council of [Barcelona and the UCLG Committee on Culture.](#), that include examples in Abitibi-Témiscamingue (Canada), Cēsis (Latvia), Bilbao (Spain), Nevşehir and Seferihisar (Turkey), Yarra Ranges (Australia), Strasbourg (France), Kanazawa (Japan), Ségou (Mali), Jeonju and Jeju (South Korea), Regensburg (Germany), Pekalongan (Indonesia). See more examples in: <http://obs.agenda21culture.net/en/good-practices/culturat-mobilisation-initiative-sustainable-development>. Some of these cities are members of the [UNESCO Creative Cities Network](#)
- ³¹ See: <https://www.shareable.net/sharing-city-seoul-a-model-for-the-world/>. Seoul's social economy data for 2017: 7,810 jobs by 286 registered Certified Social Enterprises and 1,310 jobs by 202 Pre-Certified Social Enterprises; 7,590 jobs by 2,701 cooperatives; 250 jobs by 114 Village Enterprises; and 1,379 jobs by 171 Self-Reliance Enterprises, with specific focus on vulnerable groups (women represent 65% of the newly employed force). See: <http://www.gsef-net.org/>. See also One Earth, in collaboration with the Urban Sustainable Directors Network: <https://bit.ly/2YKo9NZ>, and ILO (2015), Localizing the Decent Work Agenda through South-South and City-to-City cooperation, ILO, available online at: <http://socialeconomy.itcilo.org/en/readers>. Abidjan has already established its one-stop office for social and shared economy
- ³² *Pact for a Social and Solidarity Economy* adopted by the city of Cordoba (Spain). See: https://cooperacion.cordoba.es/images/stories/cooperacion/Plan_Municipal/PLAN-DE-PyS-18-22/PLAN_MUNICIPAL.pdf.
- ³³ ILO (2018), *World Employment Social Outlook, Trends 2018*, Geneva, ILO. WIEGO estimates that around 80% of urban employment in developing countries to be informal, mostly in Sub-Saharan Africa, Southern Asia and, increasingly, in Latin America. See: <http://www.wiego.org/informal-economy/statistical-picture>.
- ³⁴ For example: with street vendors in Solo- Indonesia or waste-pickers' organizations, in Belo Horizonte, Dhaka or Surabaya, and others (Asuncion (Paraguay), Pietermaritzburg (South Africa), Lagos (Nigeria), Nairobi (Kenya), Quito (Ecuador) or in Qalyubeya, Egypt). See: Lethbridge, J., "Municipal Solid Waste Management Services in Latin America", PSIRU, Greenwich, July 2017 http://www.world-psi.org/sites/default/files/documents/research/web_en_lrgm_waste_report_ia_20174.pdf; <http://www.emaseo.gob.ec/quito-a-reciclar/> and also: <https://www.emgirs.gob.ec/index.php/setup/centros-de-educacion-y-gestion-ambiental>. Freek Colombijn and Martina Morbidini (2017), *Pros and cons of the formation of waste-pickers' cooperatives: a comparison between Brazil and Indonesia*, Volume 44, Issue 2, pp. 91-101, <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s40622-017-0149-5>. See also: CLGF (2015), Local Economic Development in Asia-Pacific: A review of Policy and Practice, available online at: http://www.clgf.org.uk/default/assets/File/Publications/reports/2015%20Local_Economic_Development_in_Asia_Pacific.pdf
- ³⁵ For example, Seoul's Crime Prevention through Environmental Design Project (CPTED) targets troubled neighborhoods, involving communities, schools, the private sector, the police, and district offices in selected areas, in its effort to find innovative ways to successfully tackle crime. The robbery rate on the Salt Way has dropped by as much as 12% and there have been no reported cases of rape. Citynet, City Voices, spring-summer 2016. The 1st project was launched in 2012.

- ³⁶ Medellín in Latin America, after being one of the most violent cities in the world in the 1990's, by 2000 local government succeeded in reducing its murder rate ten-fold, thanks to participatory and inclusive policies involving all sectors of its society. Medellín Cómo Vamos, <https://www.medellincomovamos.org/violencia-y-crimen-en-medellin-pasado-presente-y-futuro/>, published online (Feb. 2019)
- ³⁷ <https://www.uclg-cisd.org/en/right-to-the-city/world-charter-agenda>. The European Coalition of Cities Against Racism (ECCAR) gathers more than 100 European local authorities and has worked on non-discrimination issues over more than a decade. Similar regional coalitions exist in different continent after the umbrella of ICCAR, a partner entity of UNESCO whose name was recently transformed to that of International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities. See: <https://www.eccar.info/>
- ³⁸ Metropolis (2018)
- ³⁹ E.g. Argentina, Estonia, Italy, Indonesia, Philippines, Mexico, see: <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/stories/new-approaches-new-opportunities-expanding-the-reach-of-local-open-government/>; <https://opengov.uclg.org/>
- ⁴⁰ Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR), Report on Housing Policies in Asia Region, (report prepared for UCLG-GOLD); https://knowyourcity.info/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/SDI_StateofSlums_LOW_FINAL.pdf.
- ⁴¹ A large number of innovative solutions have been experimented to include and benefit specific excluded and disadvantaged social groups: homeless (i.e. Paris, São Paulo), LGBT+ (various Brazilian experiences), migrant workers (i.e. Taoyuan, Taiwan), youth (multiple experiences, e.g. Valongo, Portugal), women (e.g. Solo/Surakarta, Indonesia, Seville, Spain), ethnic minorities in cities (i.e. São Paulo, Brazil or Rosario, Argentina), extreme poor (i.e. Yaoundé, Cameroon), disabled (i.e. Sanxia district, Taiwan; La Serena, Chile); rural communities in cities (i.e. Quito or Cuenca, Ecuador; Chengdu, China) etc.
- ⁴² <https://citiesfordigitalrights.org>. The coalition include metropolitan cities such, Amsterdam, Athens, Barcelona, Berlin, Chicago, Helsinki, Kansas, London Los Angeles, New York, Milan, Moscow, Munich, Sidney, Vienna, among others
- ⁴³ For example: **DECIDIM** platform, developed as a mechanism for democratic governance in Barcelona to articulate any type of democratic process. Its design and its flexibility, its modular architecture and its open development model has facilitated its adoption by 80 local and regional governments and a quarantine of social organizations. See: UCLG Digital Cities and Bilbao (2019), Smart Cities Study 2019, Bilbao, based on a study of 89 cities.
- ⁴⁴ OECD and UCLG (2019). These figures are based on a sample of 106 countries for expenditure, 104 countries for revenue and 99 countries for direct public investment.
- ⁴⁵ OECD and UCLG (2019)
- ⁴⁶ The study includes 160 countries. Ivanya, M, Shah, A. *How close is your government to its people? Worldwide indicators on Localization and Decentralization*, Policy research Working paper 6138, World Bank, 2014, in Ahmad et al (2019). The study includes 160 countries.
- ⁴⁷ A further analysis of the evolution of multilevel governance process in the framework of the SDGs implementation, can be found in: UCLG (2019), *The Localization of the Global Agendas, GOLD V Report*.
- ⁴⁸ UNDESA (2018).
- ⁴⁹ NUA paragraph 89 and 149; UN Habitat (2016), p.117
- ⁵⁰ GTF and UCLG (2019). Only in 47 countries out of the 142 countries that presented their VNR to the HLPF between 2016 and 2019, local governments are associated or consulted by the national coordination mechanisms for the SDGs follow-up. With regard NUPs, a survey realized by UCLG IN 2016 show some involvement in Latin American countries, but limited involvement in Asia and in Africa.
- ⁵¹ Functionally, the concept of peri-urban ranges from suburbs on the fringes of large and congested metropolitan areas to towns that can be placed in a more rural environment but situated in the orbit of urban centres which whom they are linked by regular exchanges and can represent the very last connection between the urban and the rural, acting as the interface through which the rural economy interacts with an urban one.
- ⁵² This section is extracted from the Chapter 3, of GOLD IV Report (UCLG ,2016)
- ⁵³ e.g. Sustainable Food Cities in the UK; *Red de ciudades por la Agroecología* in Spain; *Rete Città Sane* in Italy; the Dutch City Deal: Food on the Urban Agenda; the German BioStädte network and other practices at regional and global level (*Agroecocities*; ICLEI-RUAF CityFood network). One of the most meaningful initiatives is the *Milan Urban Food Policy Pact*, with 203 signatory cities from all the continents with 450 million inhabitants since 2015. Based on the Québec Declaration of 2015, Regions of France, with the support of UCLG, launched an initiative to foster a progressive reterritorialization of food systems. See: <http://www.milanurbanfoodpolicypact.org/>
- ⁵⁴ <https://ccacoalition.org/en/resources/promise-seoul-taking-action-against-climate-change>
- ⁵⁵ Seoul Metropolitan Government (2018)
- ⁵⁶ See: <https://citiesforhousing.org/> Cities for Adequate Housing, New York, 16th July 2018

⁵⁷ <https://www.globalcovenantofmayors.org/our-cities/>; <https://carbonn.org/>

⁵⁸ <https://sharingcitiesalliance.com/>; <http://www.gsef-net.org/en>. Sharing City Seoul project launched in 2013, was one of the more ambitious (<http://english.seoul.go.kr/policy-information/economy/social-economy/1-social-economy/>; <http://www.gsef-net.org/en/gsef-about>); <http://www.localgovsharingecon.com/>.

⁵⁹ 163. See the CLGF country profiles; CEMR (2019) Women in politics; and UCLG Africa and Cities Alliance (2018), Assessing the Institutional Environment of Local Governments in Africa, and UCLG ASPAC and Cities Alliance (2018) City enabling environment rating. Brazil, Guatemala, Panama and Antigua & Barbados. Data on “Autonomy in decision making” were provided by the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean - CEPAL, latest available data 2018. See <http://tiny.cc/83u27y>.

⁶⁰ https://www.metropolis.org/sites/default/files/metobsip4_en.pdf

⁶¹ <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2015/4/quito-a-city-committed-to-preventing-sexual-harassment-in-public-spaces>

⁶² https://www.metropolis.org/sites/default/files/metobsip4_en.pdf

⁶³ <https://www.metropolis.org/news/urban-experiences-fight-sexual-harassment-metropolitan-areas>

⁶⁴ See. <http://sustainablefoodcities.org/>, www.ciudadesagroecologicas.eu/, <https://www.retecittasane.it/>, <https://www.ruaf.org/projects/dutch-city-deal-food-urban-agenda>, : <https://www.biostaedte.de/>, <http://www.agroecocities.eu/>, <https://www.ruaf.org/cityfood>, <http://www.milanurbanfoodpolicypact.org/>