

ACTIVITY REPORT 2008

Summary: policy paper on social inclusion policies, project for an Observatory on social inclusion policies, 'World Charter Agenda on Human Rights in the city', the promotion of citizen participation and 2009 – 2010 agenda.

Drawing up of a policy paper on social inclusion¹

After a previous analysis and reflection on the existing social inclusion policies², the Committee made a proposal for a political document aiming at providing a debate on social inclusion within UCLG. This debate was started in the UCLG Executive Bureau in Quito³ and was extended to the regional sections and working committees of the organization. The result of this debate was a political position shared by local governments with regards to fighting poverty and social exclusion. Various committees took part in this political debate, which led to a crosscutting document that articulates social inclusion with other issues dealt with by UCLG such as periphery, urban mobility, strategic planning or social cohesion and peace.

This document underlines the problems of poverty and social inequality in cities throughout the world and also the need to place social inclusion policies on the centre stage of local governments' agendas. This is especially important for achieving the Millennium Development Goals set for the year 2015. It is essential that social inclusion policies deal with various thematic axes: including groups of excluded people or in risk of becoming excluded, protecting fundamental rights and building a more united society. It is essential for citizens to participate in designing and assessing these policies, for them to be more efficient and sustainable. This paper also makes a call to strengthen the coordination between the different levels of government and to decentralise political competences and financial resources.

The policy paper on social inclusion will be submitted to the World Council in Istanbul for approval.

Towards an Observatory on Social Inclusion Policies

The Committee has started working on the creation of the Observatory on Social Inclusion policies with the support from various local governments. Essentially, this Observatory will consist of a database on innovative local social inclusion policies, which will allow defining social inclusion and exclusion indicators. Also a study plan has been foreseen that will lead to the creation of useful tools for local governments for planning and implementing social inclusion policies. Up to present, 50 policies from cities in different regions worldwide have been compiled and documented.

¹ The **Committee on Social Inclusion and Participatory Democracy** has the mission of studying the following topics in depth: social inclusion, citizen participation and the right to the city, as well as monitoring worldwide the processes and results achieved in these areas to disseminate them to UCLG and other international bodies. The Committee also aims at promoting the creation of effective proposals to be developed by local governments and civil society organisations to make ensure that citizen fully enjoy their rights and to design public policies that guarantee an inclusive city with adequate living conditions for all its inhabitants.

² Compilation of and information on 50 innovative social inclusion policies developed in cities from the different regions in the world. Organisation of an international seminar with 200 participants ("1st International Seminar on Innovative Local Policies for Social Inclusion", Barcelona 27-28 September 2007).

³ 9 & 10 July 2008.

The World Charter Agenda on Human Rights in the City

Drawing on previous initiatives at a regional level⁴, various local governments have promoted a world charter reflecting the political commitment of cities towards human rights. This document contains the basic range of human rights that local governments are committed to guarantee, together with an action plan for each of the rights. The human rights included in the charter agenda are: the right to the city; the right to citizen participation; the right to peace and security; childhood rights; the right to public services, the right to education; culture and diversity; the right to housing and homes; the right to water; energy and food; the right to the environment, public transport and a sustainable urban development.

The document, currently a draft, is under political debate, both by local governments and by civil society and the academic world. In this sense, there will be a debate session with social movements in the framework of the World Social Forum / Forum of Local Authorities in 2009⁵.

The role of local governments in promoting citizen participation

The links with and collaboration with the International Observatory on Participatory Democracy (IOPD) have been strengthened⁶. The compilation of practices in citizen participation gathered by the IOPD has been shared with the cities represented in the Committee in order to inspire a local agenda for citizen participation. Various cities have initiated debates to design this agenda inside the Committee.

2009 - 2010 Prospective

- ✓ Discuss social inclusion in the framework of the whole worldwide organisation, especially at the 3rd UCLG World Congress (2010).
- ✓ Create the Observatory on Social Inclusion policies.
- ✓ Approve the 'World Charter Agenda on Human Rights in the City', disseminate it and promote its implementation in cities.
- ✓ Prepare the local agenda for citizen participation and have an impact on the agendas of local governments.
- ✓ Present the work carried out and advance in the political reflection with an international congress to be held in Barcelona in 2010.

⁴ Mainly the World Charter on the Right to the City, Montreal's Charter on Rights and Responsibilities and the European Charter for the Safeguarding of Human Rights in the City.

⁵ Belém, Brazil. 28 – 30 January 2008

⁶ The Committee has been invited to be part of the Jury of the 3rd IOPD Distinction "Good Practice in Citizen Participation" and to take part in the 7th Annual IOPD Conference (La Paz, 19-21 November 2008).