



OFFICIAL STATEMENT OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL IN MARCH 27, 2009
“LET’S BUILD THE INCLUSIVE CITIES OF THE 21ST CENTURY”



TO THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

Local governments play a key role in a globalized world where most of the population lives in cities and metropolitan areas. This is a world facing new social, economic, political and cultural complexities, with new and diverse challenges and opportunities.

It is in the urban environment where the human and social effects of exclusion appear. To this global situation we must add the impact of the current accelerated urbanisation process, a context that puts cities before a political challenge that is of crucial management: building cohesive cities within the framework of globalisation. For this reason, social inclusion policies must be at the strategic centre of the policy agenda of local governments in this century, together with the financial, human and infrastructure resources needed for their development. This is particularly important if the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals is to be a reality and not just a simple declaration of intentions of the States.

According to this agreement, the challenges set for 2015 are to half poverty and hunger; to find a definitive solution to external debt; to define rules of fair trade; to reduce by to thirds the under-five mortality rate; and to provide universal access to public services. Over the last few years, forceful global trends have appeared increasing the difficulty of achieving these goals: the food crisis, characterized by the increase without precedents of food prices, and now, the financial crisis, which will lead to important economic deceleration that is already affecting not only the leading economies, but also emerging ones, and that will worsen the situation of peripheral economies.

In response to this, it is an obvious fact that local governments play a fundamental role these days in the development of public social cohesion policies, which are often carried out going beyond their powers. A few examples are: local governments guarantee universal access to basic services and safeguard the rights of citizens; they plan actions to fight against poverty and to generate quality employment; they deal with people and families in vulnerable situations; they create urban policies integrating the social diversity; they make accessible mobility possible through quality public transport; they make a commitment to the fight to slow down climate change; they generate areas of democratic participation, which are very important for the collective construction of the city; they manage the contemporary migratory flows with guarantees



of rights and duties; etc. Within this framework, UCLG can and must be the catalyser of the leading role of cities with regard to the Millennium Goals and the fight against poverty and exclusion.

Barcelona is engaged in this range of strategies and experiences. From this standpoint it has made efforts to foster social cohesion and social inclusion policies in the international arena. The Committee on Social Inclusion and Participative Democracy – chaired by Barcelona – has managed to have unanimously adopted by the World Council of United Cities and Local Governments (that represents more than 1.000 cities in the world) a political position document on social inclusion. The document is entitled “**Let’s build the inclusive cities of the XXIst Century**” and was adopted by UCLG World Council in November 2008. This paper presents the main policy guidelines that cities are recommended to follow when designing and developing public policies for social inclusion.

For these reasons, and in accordance with articles 60.6, 65, 73.5 and 101.1 of the Municipal Regulation of the Barcelona’s City Hall, we present to the Municipal Council the following:

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The Municipal Council agrees to:

1. Keep supporting international networks of cities, and within their framework, to promote the political will of local governments in favor of strategies directed at alleviating the tendency to growth of poverty and social exclusion worldwide; to show, in the international arena, that cities are key political actors directly committed to the daily welfare of their citizens; to place the strengthening of democracy as a permanent process that has to be built in proximity and from citizens’ daily life.
2. To contribute to the action against poverty, inequalities and social exclusion by undertaking international development cooperation policies and establishing consistent links of cooperation with other cities, both bilaterally and multilaterally. To publish and disseminate the result of these actions.



3. To foster dialogue and political initiatives so that sustainable human development is one of the fundamental axes of worldwide municipalism. In this sense, to work as the presidency of the Committee on Social Inclusion to place the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals at the centre of UCLG's political agenda and that of all international city networks.
4. To disseminate within local governments the most outstanding policies on social inclusion and participatory democracy. To boost the exchange of experiences and expertise with cities worldwide.
5. To promote the strengthening of democracy from the global level through local governments and local administrations that foster citizen participation in municipal politics. To establish a fruitful dialogue with social movements and citizen transnational networks.
6. To consolidate Barcelona as a city committed to global networks on social inclusion and social cohesion. To organize working spaces and international events where local governments can express their voice and where cities are placed as the key actors of a globalization with a strong social dimension.