

Development Cooperation Forum

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Local and Regional Governments' Key Messages

Delivered by the World Organization of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)

The Local Dimension of MDGs

- **The challenges of development are ultimately local, and they cannot be solved without the knowledge, expertise, and empowerment of legitimate and accountable actors on the ground: local and regional authorities.** Given their responsibility to ensure equitable delivery of essential services, including in many cases social services around health, welfare, and housing, combined with their ability to replicate successes for community-wide benefit, local governments must be recognized as valued partners by the development community.

Governance as accelerator

- The Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) **recognizes the importance of democracy, improvement of governance. We strongly disagree with the report of the Secretary General to the UN DCF¹ in this point.** A sound governance structure which is responsible, accountable and inclusive is the only sustainable vehicle for development. **The gender equality policy has been a great lesson to this end: The quota systems and other advancement mechanisms have only led to true empowerment of women within democratic societies.** Social progress and sustainable environmental policies are prime engines of development where local and regional authorities have a key role to play.

The Tools

- **The strength of decentralized cooperation is that it is flexible** and it is framed in long term partnerships that take very much into account the demand of the recipient.
- **South-South and triangular cooperation have proven more effective when involving all actors and levels of government.** Decentralized cooperation is about diversity but not dissemination and is stronger when synergizing with the overall country development strategies.

¹“However, **the rise in aid to governance is of uncertain benefit:** while potentially enhancing transparency and accountability of public financial management in programme countries, its long-term impact needs fuller analysis, especially because it is dominated by large technical assistance programmes.” **UN Secretary General** (2010) Report of the Secretary-General to the ECOSOC Development Cooperation Forum, Paragraph 55 – Ref. **E/2010/93**.

On Aid Efficiency

- **We estimate that less than 10% of the aid received by countries is channeled through the local and regional levels weakening the accountability and ownership of the initiatives.** Local governments are not only able to engage and consult their local communities with regard to their development needs; they are also immediately answerable to them and far more visible. Development can be a far more democratic and transparent process through their inclusion than through centralized sectoral planning.
- **We agree with the Secretary General's Report** about the importance of avoiding earmarking and support overall development policies of nations. **We propose however that at least 25% of the support provided should be channeled through the sub-national structures to ensure greater efficiency.**
- **How to improve Alignment and Harmonization from the perspective of the subnational level?**
 - Offer a balance of aid delivery mechanisms (e.g. projects, program based approaches, budget support and technical assistance) to support governance and decentralization.
 - Design aid channelled through budgetary support and sector-wide approaches (SWAps) in a manner that recognizes and reinforces the legitimate role of local authorities as credible public institutions and agents of development.

Partnership MDG8

- **Members of UCLG are sound partners for the achievement of MDGs.** The members of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), the united voice of cities, regional authorities and their associations across the world, are leading the way in a variety of development and cooperation initiatives. These include: South-South and triangular cooperation; Capacity building; Participatory initiatives such as City Development Strategies and Urban Strategic Planning; Advocacy activities before international donor and financial institutions.
- **Local and regional authorities have organised themselves at national, regional and international level though associations.** These mechanisms should be acknowledged and included in the policy development at different levels. This would contribute to achieving MDG8-promoting partnerships.