

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION

United Cities and Local Governments

Policy Paper: Development Cooperation and Local Government

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Introduction

“Municipal International Cooperation and decentralised cooperation, partnership, twinning, international local government diplomacy, sister city links, and mutual assistance through capacity-building programmes and international municipal solidarity initiatives, are a vital contribution to the construction of a peaceful and sustainably developed world.” (*Preamble to UCLG Statutes*)

The Objects of UCLG, set out in Article 3 of its Statutes, include the following:

- To be the worldwide source of learning, exchange and capacity-building, supporting the establishment and strengthening of free and autonomous local governments and their national associations;
- To promote economic, social, cultural, vocational and environmental development and service to the population based on the principles of good governance, sustainability and social inclusion;
- To promote decentralised cooperation and international cooperation between local governments and their associations;
- To promote twinning and partnerships as a means for mutual learning and friendship between peoples

Therefore, the intertwining of learning, capacity-building, development and governance, and exchange and cooperation between local governments, is built into UCLG’s very DNA.

The world is changing fast, and faces new and difficult challenges which have a powerful impact on local governments, and on development at local level. At the same time, the international community and donors – many of whom have financially supported local governments’ international cooperation - have been rethinking and recasting their approach to “aid effectiveness”.

It is timely, therefore, to re-examine (1) how UCLG and its members can best work together to promote learning and cooperation for positive development, and (2) how they can inform, educate and influence the international community in support of locally-driven international cooperation for development.

For this reason, UCLG’s Development Cooperation and City Diplomacy Committee (DCCD) and Capacity and Institution-Building Working Group (CIB) jointly agreed to draw up a Policy Paper on Development Cooperation and Local Government, and in the light of this, an Advocacy Strategy to promote UCLG’s objectives.

In preparing the Paper, the drafters have had the support of a Reference Group of experienced practitioners, including a seminar on the theme, as well as receiving important feedback from both the DCCD Committee and the CIB Working Group. In addition, they have had the benefit of a set of detailed responses from UCLG members to a questionnaire sent out over the summer 2011. All of these inputs are strongly reflected in the text which follows, and in particular in the various recommendations and ideas for action. The questionnaire was itself based to a large extent on points and ideas which came from the practitioners’ workshop, and ought to find out to what extent those points and ideas were or were not supported, and to seek further insights and perspectives.

The Policy Paper also draws upon the earlier UCLG Position Paper on Aid Effectiveness, also steered by the DCCD Committee (in its earlier form) and CIB Working Group, published in early 2010.

PART 1 – THE POLICY CONTEXT

1. Local governments' international cooperation and partnerships

Changing world, evolving practice

Local governments have worked together in partnerships and twinnings for over 60 years. After the Second World War, European towns and cities established thousands of twinnings, which aimed mainly at inter-cultural dialogue, promotion of peace and mutual understanding, and the construction of a united Europe. Some east-west links were created across the then 'iron curtain', between cities living under very different political systems. From the 1950s, the USA Sister Cities International movement also sprang up, with community to community links between US and (mainly) Asian and European partners. In these, however, the local government itself tended to play a less central role.

The relationship of European and North American cities and municipalities with Africa, Latin America, Asia and the Middle East is also long-standing (from the 1960s on), and diverse in origin and content. Historic, linguistic and cultural links are often at the origin of these partnerships, many of which represent the commitment (after independence) to work together for a better post-colonial future. In more recent times, these links may often be created, or maintained, due to the presence in the "northern" city of an important migrant population from the partner country. Another motivation was that of solidarity, after civil wars, natural disasters, liberation struggles or political persecution. Municipal cooperation with cities in countries as diverse as Lebanon, Nicaragua or post-apartheid South Africa often originates from this desire to show solidarity.

Many of these links, especially with partners in China, and to a lesser extent Japan, have a principal economic motivation, reflecting a wish by the partner to be connected to a rapidly developing country, with future business potential, and reflect a "positioning" in a more globalised world. At the same time, such partnerships often include development issues, e.g. helping to tackle practical problems like water quality or environmental problems.

At least since the 1980s, and with greater density in more recent years, many "northern" local governments have wanted to undertake development cooperation with partners in the "south". As the international community focused increasingly on the need to assist low income countries (LICs) and their peoples, e.g. via the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and as local citizens in the "north" showed more support for international development, their local governments increasingly reflected this engagement to tackle the injustices and worst inequalities of our world. In addition, new partnerships for development between local governments from lower or middle income countries have started to grow in number and importance, reflecting the fact that shared challenges and experiences can be the most effective way to enhance mutual learning.

In addition, in several countries, national development ministries began to provide financing support for local government partnerships for development. In this kind of development cooperation, which receives external financing, there is a stronger pressure to integrate the local government contribution into wider national and international policy frameworks.

But not all modern local government partnerships have one partner's 'development' needs as the main purpose. There exists today a whole range of international partnerships, often between larger cities and towns, from different continents, which aim more broadly at (for example) mutual learning on issues of urban management, or focus on the local dimension of key global issues, such

as climate change. So a specific UCLG policy on ‘development cooperation’ needs to be based on some conceptual distinctions.

Typologies of partnership and cooperation

In this and subsequent sections, the term LIC means lower income country, and HIC means higher income country, with reference to relative per person GDP.

Without being complete, we may summarise the types and purposes of local government international cooperation and partnerships as follows, whilst noting that they can overlap and evolve from one type to another:

- A. Local *community-based twinnings*, for the purpose of promoting peace, mutual understanding between peoples, and/or cultural dialogue. The link may be led by the LG or by the local civil society organisations (CSOs) with support from the town hall. These links can help in post-conflict reconciliation processes.
- B. Partnerships for *mutual learning* on LG management, urban development, or on different thematic issues within the competences of all partners (e.g. social inclusion, transport, environmental policy....). These partnerships have practical learning between peers on municipal issues as the focus, and may be between partners from high income countries (HICs), or from both HICs and LICs, or between LICs.
- C. Partnerships between LGs where the *economic motive* (business, trade, investment) is the main driver. This often characterizes links of non-Chinese and Chinese city partners, combined with an element of inter-cultural dialogue.
- D. Partnerships between LGs to tackle and exchange on *global issues* such as climate change – these may often be combined with type B.
- E. Partnerships between LGs, with at least one from a LIC and one from a HIC, where addressing the *development needs* of the LIC partner is the principal – but not necessarily the sole – purpose of the partnership.
- F. Partnerships between Local Government Associations (LGAs), with at least one from a LIC and one from a HIC, aimed at helping to build the *capacity of the LGAs* of the LICs, so that they in turn can better respond to the development needs of their members.

It is on the type E and F partnerships that this Policy Paper concentrates – LG international development cooperation. The forms of these partnerships for development may also be sub-divided:

- The partnership may be a stand-alone one between two LGs, one from a HIC, one from a LIC
- It may involve the HIC partner with two or more LIC partners (“north-south-south”), or
- A grouping of several HIC and LIC partners around a common theme – the HIC and the LIC partners will usually come from the same country respectively, but they may come from more than one country
- The partnership may be organised by the partner LGs concerned, or
- It may be part of a development cooperation programme organised by, or through, a Local Government Association (LGA), and often financially supported by a governmental or international funder/donor
- The partnership may be between, or include, the LGAs of the HIC and LIC.

The partnerships under E. are generally known in the LG community as Municipal International Cooperation (MIC), or as LG Decentralised Cooperation (DC). These terms are to some extent interchangeable, though there are some nuances of difference. The partnerships between LGAs under F. are usually described as ACB partnerships, i.e. Association Capacity-Building.

In fact, the terms Municipal International Cooperation and Decentralised Cooperation are often also applied to other forms of cooperation, under examples A. to D. above. Other names often used are City to City Cooperation (C2C), or simply (town) twinning. In order to clarify our terminology for the purpose of this UCLG Policy Paper, and the proposed UCLG Advocacy Strategy, a single terminology is proposed below.

We should note here that local governments in HICs often provide support for the objectives of international development and the MDGs in other ways than through their partnerships. For example, LGs provide financial support to local development NGOs, to support the NGO's own development partnership activities. LGs and their LGAs may fund and take part in activities to raise awareness of and support for international development and the MDGs, and development ministries may fund these 'awareness-raising' activities.

In preparing this Policy Paper, a consultation questionnaire was sent out to UCLG members, and the first question related to the scope of the subject-matter, given the diversity of international activities undertaken by local governments. Although the number of responses was not large enough to permit us to draw statistically valid conclusions, there was very broad agreement on the following three propositions:

- (1) UCLG should make explicit its support for all forms of international cooperation between local governments;
- (2) UCLG should also promote, explicitly, all forms of local governments' support for development, for example through their financial or practical support for development NGOs, or through development education, as well as through their own international partnerships;
- (3) But the focus of the policy/advocacy paper should be on local and regional government partnerships for development, which play a special role and require special consideration.

However, several respondents, when asked whether we need a tighter definition under point 3, argued that we did – at least for the longer term. The next section looks at this and other issues relating to our partnerships for development in more detail.

Recommendation:

That UCLG

- **Reaffirm its support for all forms of international cooperation between local governments,**
- **Underline that local governments provide support for development in a variety of ways, for example through their financial or practical support for development NGOs, or through development education, as well as through their own international partnerships,**
- **Agree that the present policy paper and advocacy strategy should focus on local and regional governments' cooperation and partnerships for development, which play a vital role, have specific characteristics, and require special consideration and support.**

2. Focusing on partnerships for development

Is ‘development cooperation’ an outmoded concept? Should we change the language of ‘north’ and ‘south’?

Within the broad consensus of respondents that UCLG’s policy paper and advocacy strategy should focus on our partnerships for development, there was one important and challenging voice of dissent from Mexico City, which UCLG needs to consider seriously:

« La visión "desarrollista" de la cooperación internacional es una visión vieja, que viene de los años 70 en donde todo el discurso internacional se basa en el desarrollo... CGLU no debería retomar discursos añejos, cargados de una cierta tradición colonial eurocéntrica. Las relaciones internacionales contemporáneas y la cooperación son mucho más amplias y dinámicas que la visión desarrollista. »

“The ‘development’ vision of international cooperation is an old-fashioned one, which comes from the 1970s when the whole international discourse was based on development ... UCLG should not deal with out-dated debates, loaded with a kind of colonial Eurocentric tradition. Contemporary international relations and cooperation are much richer and more dynamic than the development-related vision”.

On similar grounds, the respondent also questioned the use of “north” and “south” in terms of our relationships.

UCLG may wish to accept part of this critique, but not all. In the last section, we have looked at the different types of cooperation undertaken by local governments, which cover an enormously wide range of subjects and have a variety of objectives.

On the other hand, we live in a world of extreme inequality, between and within countries, and the MDGs represent a broad consensus among the whole international community of the need to tackle extreme poverty and injustice. Also, local governments in countries with a long tradition of local self-government have much to offer, in terms of experience, to those facing daunting new responsibilities following recent decentralisation processes, and endowed with very modest resources.

The challenge for us, therefore, is to find forms of partnership for development which, though involving relationships between financially unequal partners, ensure that they are based on equality of ownership and respect, and on a real reciprocity.

UCLG may also wish to reconsider the use of the terms “north” and “south”, which, while providing a useful short-hand, are becoming increasingly difficult conceptually as the world changes, and the economic balance shifts. Moreover, ‘north-south’ is not an accurate description of many partnerships which undoubtedly have a ‘development’ purpose - for example, an EU or North American country’s cooperation with countries in the Caucasus or central Asia. Again, many of the toughest urban poverty and development challenges for the future – where partnerships for development will be of potentially great importance - will be in countries geographically north as well as south of the equator, e.g. in many parts of Asia.

It is therefore proposed that, for formal policy purposes, UCLG adopt the terminology of Lower Income Countries (LICs), Higher Income Countries (HICs), and where appropriate, Middle Income

Countries (MICs). These terms are based on Gross National Income (GNI) per head of population, and are used for example by the World Bank in its classification system. It should be emphasized that these are not static or immutable categories, and within each category (and country) there may be wide divergences at local level in development needs and potential.

Recommendation:

That for the purposes of formulating its policy and advocacy strategy on partnerships for development, UCLG uses – in place of the terms ‘north’ and ‘south’ - the more neutral terms of Higher Income Countries (HICs) and Lower Income Countries (LICs),

Should we include regional as well as local government partnerships?

The Flemish association VVSG (Belgium) raised another important issue in its response to the questionnaire, in which some questions referred to Local and Regional Government Partnerships (LRG). In essence, this raises issues discussed in a broader context within UCLG, as to the role of regions in our organisation. The association argued:

“We regard it as crucial that the difference between local authorities and regional authorities is made. Both concepts are completely different from each other, use different guiding principles, have different aid modalities, implement completely different strategies and can count on different budgets as well. On top of that, a lot of regional authorities act as donor towards local governments and in that respect are in the same position as national governments.”

It is correct that there is a tension here, especially in the case of federal or quasi-federal countries like Belgium where the ‘region’ (or province, or state) has in effect two roles. First, as a part of the *national state* set-up – when it is often responsible for legislating for, financing and even controlling local government – and second, as a *subnational territorial authority*, where its role and interests are more closely aligned to those of local government. In other non-federal countries (e.g. France) the regional authorities are seen as part of the system of subnational territorial authorities (*collectivités territoriales*), and undertake a lot of development cooperation through inter-regional partnerships, and often in partnership with local governments.

Recommendation:

It is proposed, therefore, that UCLG should include regional governments in its development cooperation policy, so far as their role is that of territorial authority working in similar modalities to (and often in partnership with) local governments.

However, we should differentiate in our policy and advocacy between the cases:

- Where local and regional authorities work together in partnerships for development
- Where the territorial cooperation is between regional governments alone
- Where regions are acting more as donors or financers of development cooperation, including for their local governments, rather than as territorial partners or actors on the ground

In this last case, UCLG should not be directly involved, in terms of policy formulation or advocacy.

UCLG could also ask Metropolis (whose members include important metropolitan regions) to work more closely with the CIB Working Group and Development Cooperation and City Diplomacy (DCCD) Committee on these issues.

This still leaves the question of whether, in terms of language on this issue, UCLG refers to Local and Regional Governments throughout, or whether we use the term Local Governments, but with the meaning of “all sub-national levels of government”. The European Union uses the single term ‘Local Authorities’ to cover regional as well as local governments, which means that even large German Länder are included, and may cause some confusion. This question is dealt with in the next sub-section.

Towards a single name and a tighter description

As we have earlier noted, the local government community has not settled on a single name to describe either its forms of cooperation in general, or its development cooperation activities. Both traditionally-used terms – *decentralised cooperation* (DC) and *municipal international cooperation* (MIC) – have a long tradition and colleagues from different countries use one or the other to define their work, and will no doubt do so in future, whatever term we use within UCLG.

However, UCLG covers different types of local and subnational governments involved in development cooperation, and not all of these identify themselves as ‘municipal’. Moreover the term ‘decentralised cooperation’ is also used by others, like the EU, to include partnerships between other types of local, non-state, actors. So UCLG needs to decide whether to use a single terminology to encapsulate our forms of cooperation for development.

Several responses to the questionnaire called for a clearer definition, and some proposed a specific new terminology, e.g. “international local government cooperation” (“coopération internationale des pouvoirs locaux”) was suggested by the city of Nouakchott, Mauritania. The LCAP, the Punjab (Pakistan) association, made a similar suggestion. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) proposed “Local Government Development Cooperation”. If we wish to expressly include *regional* government partnerships, the name will need to reflect this, and could therefore be “local and regional partnerships for development” (acronym in English LAR-PAD, for example).

Some respondents also suggested that we should, at this stage, list the different roles, factors or principles that underpin and give specificity to DC/MIC. Others felt that the concept needs further work, and that a tighter definition would help to ensure a higher quality level of work.

The Finnish association, AFLRA, suggested that we should list key factors, including: results-oriented approach, equality and mutuality-based, peer organisation cooperation between north and south. Buenos Aires proposed that we include reference to the different modalities in which cooperation takes place, and emphasizing the concepts of horizontality, partnership, and the need to replace the dichotomy ‘donor-recipient’. Cités Unies France (CUF) felt the main point is that it involves cooperation between local governments, from one territory to another.

FCM and VNG International (Netherlands) both favoured more precision or refinement; for VNG, a tighter definition could help ensure a higher quality level of practice, show evidence of added value of our way of working toward donor community, and make learning exchanges more effective. The association NAVIN (Nepal) felt that a distinction between urban and rural was needed, and Nouakchott wanted to include the different types of collaboration and links (inter-communal, inter-departmental, inter-regional cooperation...). The association COMURES (El Salvador) wants the concept to start from the perspective of local and regional government’s contribution to

development at national level. The Diputació Barcelona felt it important to clarify our concepts, as the differences between decentralised cooperation and municipal international cooperation are not clear. They suggested that the Observatory of Decentralised Cooperation (EU/Latin America) could contribute to the debate over definitions.

The following section examines and proposes a set of values and key elements ('factors') which are at the heart of local and regional governments' development cooperation, but these merit further study and discussion.

Recommendations:

(1) That for UCLG's own policy/advocacy purposes, a single descriptive title is agreed and used, which includes the word "development" to emphasize the specific focus of the work. For example:

- ***Local Government Development Cooperation, or***
- ***Local and Regional Government Development Cooperation, or***
- ***Local and Regional Partnerships for Development***

(2) That UCLG continue to work on the concepts underpinning our local and regional cooperation for development, not as an academic exercise, but as part of a wider approach to encourage improvements in practice by all actors.

(3) To ask the CIB Working Group, in cooperation with the Observatory of Decentralised Cooperation and other appropriate organisations, to take this work forward, and to report on the outcome to the DCCD Committee for consideration at political level.

3. The building blocks of LG development cooperation

Before analysing in more detail the strengths, weaknesses and added value of local governments' development cooperation, it is useful to set out:

- (1) the main *goals* of local governments' development cooperation
- (2) the principal *methodology*
- (3) the *motivations and reasons* why local and regional governments enter into development cooperation partnerships and activities, and
- (4) the *principles* and
- (5) the *key elements* which underpin that cooperation.

Goals

It is a tautology to say that the overarching goal of local governments' development cooperation is.... Development! But it is perhaps important to emphasize this, since it is in essence what distinguishes this form of LG cooperation from others. But in order to promote and enhance local development in lower income countries (LICs), local governments' cooperation may encompass a very wide range of forms and activities, to meet specific goals. In broad terms, these goals may be summarised as:

- To strengthen the strategic and practical roles of the democratic local government at the heart of the local development process (catalyst / democratic leader / strategic planner).
- To strengthen and support good local governance, so that the LG can better carry out its development roles, in particular through:
 - › building strong local public institutions for the long term;
 - › developing efficient and appropriate public services;
 - › creating and improving sustainable forms of citizen / civil society participation and inclusion in decision-making, and in the wider local development process.
- To support effective decentralisation, in particular through:
 - › building capacity of LGs to enable them to carry out new tasks and responsibilities; and
 - › maximising the added value of LGAs to influence national decentralisation policies and their implementation.
- To improve LGs' capacity to tackle and deal with the impact of global challenges, e.g. climate change, on local development.
- To strengthen the capacity of LGAs to play their several roles in supporting their members to achieve successful local development, including:
 - › their advocacy, negotiation and representation roles with central government in all aspects of the decentralisation process;
 - › their role as promoter and disseminator of learning, good practice etc., among their members, including results from international cooperation programmes.

Methodology

Peer-to-peer cooperation, learning and exchange lie at the heart of local government development cooperation, to achieve the goals set out above, in particular in building and consolidating institutional capacity. It is through exchanges of local government professionals, administrators, technicians – and not least, politicians – that the learning takes place. It is this specific character that distinguishes it from all other forms of international cooperation.

This does not mean that only local government people are involved in the cooperation – far from it. Depending on the objectives of the partnership (which will change over time), local civil societies are likely to be involved in the partnership, as may be the private sector if – for example – the cooperation is around local economic development. But LG development cooperation always has the long-term institutional role and capacity of the local government at its heart.

Within this methodology, there are many different modalities. It may be a one-to-one cooperation, or involve several local authorities. It may – and there are many advantages to this – be part of a wider programme between one country’s local governments and another’s, or even be part of a world regional or global programme.

It may well – again, this is likely to be desirable - involve the national LGAs at each end of the partnership. This can be either between the LGAs, as a specific capacity-building partnership, or it may involve the LGAs in a broader local government cooperation, to help add a multiplier effect and impact to the outcomes of the individual LG partnership and programme activities.

Motivations

The consultation questionnaire set out a list of possible motivations, and asked respondents to mark those which they thought were ‘very important’ or ‘important’. They were also invited to add other reasons. From the responses, the top four reasons were these:

- We share a co-responsibility for development
- To help meet basic human rights and MDGs
- We share a mutual interest in tackling global crises
- To create local coalitions between communities north and south

Other significant reasons were:

- Tackling issues arising from growth in population and urbanisation
- Enhancing resources and capacity development (for ‘southern’ LGs)
- Longer-term economic benefit (for ‘northern’ LGs)
- Working with diaspora communities
- Learning through ‘south-south’ partnerships
- Professional development opportunities (for ‘northern’ LGs)
- The existence of a new generation of committed mayors in the ‘south’
- Developing a positive international image

A number of other reasons were put forward, including:

- It adds value to other aid modalities; it is a new paradigm, that breaks the traditional donor–recipient relationship It brings an international perspective to the LG
- It promotes local ownership of problems and solutions
- It contributes to national foreign policy objectives
- The mission to strengthen LG worldwide

From all of the above, we may conclude that whilst there is a wide range of reasons for entering into development cooperation, most of the reasons are based on a ‘general public interest’ philosophy, rather than a philosophy of individual benefit, or ‘what does my local government get from it?’

Principles

The top four ‘motivations’ above all demonstrate that local governments are not primarily aiming to provide ‘aid’, but rather they are seeking to work together on shared issues and problems. From these and other responses, we can draw out four closely inter-connected principles, which also represent a set of shared values.

The first is ***equality of respect, ideas and creativity***, irrespective of the financial capacity and inputs of the partners. This is closely linked to a second, which is ***the rejection of a donor-recipient paradigm***. The basis is cooperation and support, not top-down or charitable ‘aid’.

The third – which is also connected but more complex – is ***reciprocity***, i.e. that both partners gain benefits from the cooperation. Since the development needs of the LIC local governments and communities are the essence of the cooperation, it is clear that in most cases, the benefits of the cooperation will and should be greater for the LIC partner(s) than for the HIC partner(s). So reciprocity does not, and cannot, mean precise equality of benefits. What is important is to see ‘reciprocity’ as a value and a philosophy for action, not as a ‘thing’ or ‘indicator’ to be precisely measured. As set out below, having clear objectives and a focus on results is essential, and may include results expected for the HIC partner - but this is separate from the principle of reciprocity as a value in its own right.

The fourth principle (also a motivation) is ***solidarity***, which can be specific or more general. Specific, if the cooperation responds to a particular humanitarian or political imperative (natural disaster, post-conflict reconstruction, post-apartheid development..); or more general, if the cooperation relates to tackling shared common challenges such as extreme poverty and inequality, or the impact of climate change on local development.

Key elements

In addition to these four principles, we can identify a set of key elements (closely connected to the Paris principles of ‘aid effectiveness’, below) which also underpin all successful LG development cooperation:

- There is co-ownership and co-responsibility for the activities and outcomes – these represent the practical consequence of the principle of reciprocity.
- The cooperation is based on realistic objectives and a shared commitment to account for results.
- The cooperation is also founded on transparency and openness between the partners and with their local communities.
- Although involvement in partnerships is decided by the political leadership of a local government, the cooperation itself is not politically aligned, and is strengthened by having multi-party support.
- There is a shared commitment to ensure that learning is spread and disseminated, within and beyond the LG itself, and using the LGA and other vectors for multiplier effect.

4. Strengths of LG development cooperation

The consultation questionnaire set out a set of perceived strengths of LG development cooperation, and asked respondents to tick each of them as either a ‘major strength’, a ‘strength’, or ‘not a strength’. They were asked to do this exercise twice – once on their own organisation’s behalf (the LG perspective), and once from the perspective of the donor/funder of our development cooperation.

From the perspective of the local and regional governments, the top 4 strengths came out as follows:

- *Proximity and local democracy*: “LGs are closest to the citizen, they have democratic legitimacy, they understand how local democracy operates”
- *Local and regional governments (LRGs) are key institutions for the long term*: “building their capacity is an investment in the long term, they need to become transparent and accountable *institutions* for the benefit of their people”
- *LRGs are providers of concrete basic services enhancing local communities’ quality of life*
- *In-depth knowledge of LG roles and operations*: “LRGs and LGAs are well-placed to design and manage LG interventions as they understand the milieu, local capacity-building, and are able to build partnerships involving wide range of actors”

In essence, these may be seen as a set of inter-connected LG “unique selling points” - they cover our understanding of each other’s roles, needs and challenges; of the development needs and aspirations of local people and communities; and of the need to build effective, sustainable public institutions at local level.

In addition, some respondents maintained that a key strength of LG development cooperation is the role of LRG as the *instigator of public policies*, and as political actors, and criticized the lack of reference to this more political dimension in the questionnaire.

Several respondents also saw LGs’ role in decentralisation policies as a strength, but also felt that this is less recognized than it should be by donors who do not always understand the LG contribution. Other strengths mentioned by African respondents include the linkages between the partners’ local civil societies, and the potential for learning and exchange.

When respondents were asked to wear the “hat” of the donors or funders, a similar set of strengths emerged:

- LRGs are key institutions for the long term
- Proximity and local democracy
- LRGs are providers of concrete basic services enhancing quality of life
- Decentralised cooperation is a cost-effective tool for local development

This therefore reflects the local government community’s feeling that our real or potential “added value” for funders is indeed our intimate knowledge of the local government role and contribution, but we must also recognize the importance of demonstrating cost-effectiveness and positive results.

Respondents were also asked to assess key ‘opportunities’ for LGs, and there was a general assent to the following opportunities

- The growing worldwide trend to decentralisation which should give bigger place to LRGs
- Donors have increasingly targeted LRG in recent years, and may continue to do so

- Donors are sensitive to the voice of ‘the south’, but the LG voice of the ‘south’ has not yet been strong enough; this can be developed and improve our success in gaining support

On the first of these ‘opportunities’, COMURES (El Salvador) affirmed that decentralisation needed to be done in negotiation with central government, and should be a gradual, systematic process and supported with resources. Also, the LG voice must be heard at national level, e.g. in relation to the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (AFLRA, Finland). The important role of LGAs in decentralisation was highlighted in several comments.

On the second point (donors’ support for LRGs), several responses added important qualifications if we are to continue to benefit – there is a need to demonstrate results, to get a multiplier effect, to professionalise our practice (Mexico City).

On the third point (strengthening the voice and role of LGs of the ‘south’), several respondents commented on the need to strengthen southern LGAs. Other points included building the capacity of LGs of the ‘south’ to draw up good project proposals and receive financial support to ‘get to the table’ (Rio Grande del Sul, Brazil; FCM), and the importance of having virtual and physical places of exchange (Buenos Aires).

Other ‘opportunities’ offered by respondents included that offered by ‘glocalization’, our more closely integrating world (ALAT), the fact that DC is a public policy of importance (Diputació Barcelona), and the benefits of moving towards more programme-based approaches (i.e. the advantages of greater scale and therefore impact).

5. Weaknesses of LG development cooperation

As regards the weaknesses of LG development cooperation, respondents were likewise asked to rank them in order of significance first for their own authority, and then from the funder/donor perspective.

The top four weaknesses, from the perspective of the LRGs, were ranked as follows:

- Too little focus on results
- Most programmes are not designed for LGs
- Lack of continuity due to political / administrative changes in one or both LGs
- Not strategic or transferable enough

Of these, the second is more a criticism of what donors / funders 'offer' to support, than a criticism of the work itself, but this point came across strongly in many responses, and needs to be taken up in the advocacy strategy.

Other weaknesses ranked fairly high include a lack of a professional development approach, and that partnerships may be 'supply-driven' and not really owned by the 'southern' partner. Other weaknesses volunteered by respondents include:

- Lack of financial resources
- The centralisation of resources by national governments
- Lack of monitoring and evaluation
- Lack of citizen support
- Inadequate legal framework for cooperation
- Lack of coordination and competition among LGs
- Threat of corruption
- "MIC needs to move away from study tours to practical programme activities" (from an African LGA)

And from the perspective of the donors, the main weaknesses are seen to be, in order of ranking:

- Too little focus on results
- Not strategic or transferable enough
- Lack of professional development approach
- Lack of continuity due to political / admin changes

Also featuring high as a donor-perceived weakness is the problem of showing clear results from capacity-building.

But in summary, the weaknesses as seen by the local governments, and as perceived to be seen by the funders, are remarkably constant, and offer some serious pointers for UCLG and its members' future work in this field.

Respondents were invited to make further comments on weaknesses, and in particular how to respond to them. Points made include the following, which concentrate on developing a more professional, organised and results-oriented approach:

- There is a need to have clear focal points and goals in our programmes (LGDK, Denmark)

- We should lobby for more complex forms of MIC, and support results-based methodologies (SKL, Sweden)
- Provide tools to institutionalize a public policy of LRG cooperation (Buenos Aires)
- Generalize the practice of evaluation (Platforma)
- Provide useful instruments to LRGs on development cooperation (Diputació Barcelona)
- Professionalise international affairs offices, evaluate activities, provide citizen education (Mexico City)
- Lobby to show the added value of a peer-to-peer approach, and be able to evaluate activities (CUF)
- We need more programme-based approaches, and to develop our own institutional capacity for effective coordination (FCM)

When asked about the main ‘threats’ to LG development cooperation, respondents ranked them as:

- Donor funding levels are reducing (main reason – the economic crisis)
- Less money is also available from LRGs for international partnership work
- Decentralisation processes are blocked or stalled in many countries

To counter these threats, respondents argued that we need to deploy stronger advocacy and lobbying, towards funders and also towards local governments. Also, that we need to demonstrate more clearly the added value and impact of our development cooperation, with more studies, and showcasing more positive experiences.

Some felt that some HIC LGs were less willing to take part, not only for financial reasons, but also because in the current political-economic climate, they did not feel it was their role to be involved in the field at all.

One respondent (LGNZ) argued that we should lobby now for a UN Charter of Local Self-Governance; in more general terms, several responses wanted more vigorous lobbying on the ‘pluses’ of decentralisation and local democracy, and of the role of LRGs as catalyst for territorial progress.

6. How far do we meet the goals of aid effectiveness?

Matching practice against key principles

The issue of local governments and aid effectiveness was the subject of an earlier UCLG Position Paper, and there is no purpose in going in detail over the same ground. For UCLG, the greater focus should be on ‘development effectiveness’, rather than ‘aid effectiveness’ (since local governments’ role is more that of partner and actor, than donor or recipient). However, some of the principles set out in the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness remain relevant and important, when translated to the local and subnational context, and can help us to assess the effectiveness of LGs’ development cooperation. We therefore asked respondents to assess their practice against some of the key principles.

The **principle of ‘ownership’** should mean that the LIC partner plays the leading role in drawing up and implementing its development policies, with the ‘donor’ respecting this role and helping strengthen the capacity to perform it. Some 25% of respondents felt this principle was fully met, and 75% felt it was partially met. Several comments indicated that there was still a risk of the model being too ‘northern-driven’ - because it is often the national ministry/agency funding the programme which sets its own broad strategies and objectives, the room for local control by the LIC partner is relatively constrained.

The **principle of mutual accountability** means, in essence, a shared and transparent responsibility of the partners (both HIC and LIC) for achieving development results. Again, over half the respondents felt that this principle was partly met, with the rest split over whether it was fully met, or not met at all. Some HIC LG responses pointed to a contradiction inherent in the financing of cooperation:

- “Aid modalities push northern partner too much into role of accountant to partners; mutual accountability implies transparency, not always in place “
- “Even though we fight against it, there is some form of donor-recipient relationship in management of funds, but not in implementation of activities”

Another important qualification came from a Latin American respondent:

- “Development is the responsibility of the countries themselves; cooperation is only a contribution to these processes.”

The **principle of ‘harmonisation’** requires ‘donors’ to work together to reduce fragmentation or duplication and to coordinate their arrangements, including through wider programme-based approaches. Most respondents felt that this principle was partly met, but few felt it was fully met, and some 25% felt it was not met.

Several responses affirmed the need for LGs to **coordinate** their activities more closely, and at least to communicate better between themselves as to who is doing what. The coordinating potential of LGAs in LICs and in HICs was emphasized. Some responses also argued that UCLG itself could play a more important role in helping with coordination. The need for closer coordination is also linked to demonstrating stronger multiplier effects / impacts from LG development cooperation. Finally, on this point, respondents argued that coordination should not be at the expense of the LIC partner’s ownership role, nor be at the expense of the partners’ autonomy.

Finally, in this section, respondents were asked for any other **ideas for improving LGs ‘aid effectiveness’**. From Buenos Aires came the proposal “formación / información” - better training and information. Training, to enhance capacity in the management of cooperation. Information, to include city development indicators for use in development cooperation. Several responses argued

for LRGs to draw up their own reference framework for testing the effectiveness of LGs' cooperation.

FCM proposed that, the more we work through programs (as opposed to single city to city partnerships), the easier it is to coordinate and be 'aid-effective'; countries need to come forward with ways to organize and coordinate their LG partnerships more effectively, to overcome donors' perception that our sector is unorganised.

Conclusions

We may draw at least four major conclusions from the above discussion on 'aid effectiveness', which are important for UCLG's future advocacy and internal practice:

- The need to ensure that the LIC partners' development needs are at the heart of our development cooperation activities and priority-setting, that the partners have shared objectives, and a shared responsibility for the results and outcomes.
- The need for LGs and their LGAs to coordinate and communicate better amongst themselves, with a view to achieving a stronger impact, and being able to demonstrate our effectiveness as development actors more fully to potential funders
- The desirability of establishing our own LRG framework and principles of local development effectiveness, which may draw on some of the principles of the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action, but which would reflect the specific character of LG development cooperation.
- The need to institutionalize, including through UCLG and its bodies, a process and culture of continuing learning, training and improvement in LG development cooperation, to enhance our overall effectiveness as a sector and as individual LGs and LGAs.

7. How far are LGs recognized as *actors for development*?

Before we turn to our proposals for the future, including the main elements of UCLG's advocacy strategy, it is necessary to assess how far, in the eyes of the international community and governments, local and regional governments are recognized as actors for development. We need to differentiate two aspects of this. Local governments may be seen as essential agents for development *in their own country*, without being seen as *international* actors for development through LG cooperation.

Thus, international donors may fund national governments in a LIC to carry out decentralisation processes, or they may even fund individual cities or regions in that country, for local development purposes. But this may not mean that LG *development cooperation* is recognized by those international donors as a useful or effective means of assisting local development, nor that (in their view) local governments are significant international actors for development.

This section therefore looks briefly at two issues. First, how far has the international community formally recognized the role of local and regional governments as actors for development, who are and should be involved in development cooperation? And second, how far have donors (in particular national governments or development agencies) de facto recognized this role, by giving practical support to LG development cooperation?

Formal recognition by the international community

Over the last 20 years, starting with the Rio Earth Summit, the UN and international community have on several occasions emphasized the role of international cooperation between local governments in favour of development, and indeed have encouraged governments to fund such cooperation. The final declaration of the 1996 Istanbul Habitat II "City Summit", for example, stated that

"International cooperation, including city to city cooperation, is both necessary and mutually beneficial in promoting sustainable human settlements development...Governments, as well as bilateral and multilateral aid agencies, should commit themselves to encouraging cooperation between local authorities and to strengthening networks and associations of local authorities".

And the UN General Assembly, in its Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium, 2001, affirmed

"There is a need for the political will of all States and for specific action at the international level, including among cities, to inspire, to encourage and to strengthen existing and innovative forms of cooperation and partnership..."

The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005) made no specific reference to local governments. However, three years later, in 2008, the follow-up Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) remedied this to some extent, stating (for example) that:

"Developing country governments will work more closely with parliaments and local authorities in preparing, implementing and monitoring national development policies and plans.

Donors will support efforts to increase the capacity of all development actors – parliaments, central and local governments, CSOs, research institutes, media and the private sector – to take an active role in dialogue on development policy and on the role of aid in contributing to countries’ development objectives.”

But while local governments are clearly identified here as *development actors* for the dialogue on aid and development, the AAA does not recognize as explicitly as we might wish the role of LGs as actors for development, through partnerships for cooperation and capacity-building.

In the 2005 revised Cotonou Partnership Agreement, the European Union and the ACP countries (African, Caribbean, Pacific) have gone a step further. The Agreement affirms the need for “building the capacity at the local and municipal levels which is required to implement decentralization policy and to increase the participation of the population in the development process.”

To achieve this, the Agreement states that what it calls “local decentralised agencies” should be:

- Informed and consulted on cooperation policies and strategies;
- Provided with financial resources to support local development processes;
- Involved in implementation of relevant cooperation projects and programmes;
- Provided with capacity building support.

Article 5 provides that cooperation should encourage partnerships and build links between ACP and EU actors, and strengthen networking and exchange of expertise and experience among the actors. For the first time in the EU-ACP agreements, European as well as ACP country local governments are made eligible for financing. In addition, Article 80 makes provision for financing of ‘decentralised cooperation’, which however covers other local actors as well as local authorities.

In recent years, the European Union has given much clearer recognition to the role of local governments as actors for development. There had been, since the 1990s, a decentralised cooperation programme, which applied to all local actors (mainly non-state), and in which local authorities were only modestly involved. But there was no explicit recognition of the role of local governments in international cooperation.

This changed in 2007. The European Parliament, on 15th March 2007, overwhelmingly adopted a resolution (proposed by Pierre Schapira, also Deputy Mayor of Paris) on local authorities and development cooperation, which set out the arguments for local authorities’ active involvement, and called on the European Commission to provide appropriate financing mechanisms.

Also in 2007, the European Commission published its strategy paper on “non-state actors and local authorities” (NSALA) which laid the guidelines for the new NSALA financing programme. For the first time, it set out a clear rationale for local governments’ role:

“While they are part of the state structure, local authorities are much closer to the citizen than other public institutions and may offer significant expertise not only in terms of service delivery (education, health, water, transport etc.), building democratic institutions and effective administrations, but also as catalysts for change and confidence building between different parties. They can provide a long-term, country-wide vision on how to build inclusive societies as actors with the necessary political legitimacy and the capacity to mobilise other actors.”

This was followed, in 2008, by the publication of the Commission's communication, "*Local Authorities: Actors for Development*", which gave a positive assessment of the role local authorities are playing:

"While the involvement of local authorities in external cooperation and development policy, especially through town twinning, has a long history, the last decade has witnessed a radical change in its nature. Decentralised Cooperation has emerged as a new and important dimension of development cooperation. It has become more comprehensive and professionalised; relying on institutionalised networks with outreach into developing countries; utilising a diversity of tools in all the regions of the world and with an exponential increase in financial allocations."

This last point about local authorities' "financial allocations" for overseas development aid (ODA) needs, however, to be qualified. It is true that there has been an increase, but the EU's definition of "local authorities" is extremely broad, and in fact, covers all sub-national authorities, even including regions in federal and quasi-federal states (like the German Länder and Spanish Autonomous Communities) whose role is often more akin to that of a central government development aid-provider. Most local and regional/provincial governments' activity is as a partner in decentralised cooperation, rather than as an aid "donor".

The Commission's Communication set out a well-received series of proposals, including:

- To set the decentralised cooperation activities of local governments more clearly within the principles of aid effectiveness (the Paris Declaration principles);
- To support the role of local governments in decentralisation processes, in fields such as local democracy, governance, local economic development, and territorial development;
- To establish better information on the extent of decentralised cooperation (e.g. an atlas), and a better dialogue with European associations and networks;
- To support the role of national associations in partner countries, to enable them to take part in national political dialogue; and
- To support the evolution of twinnings towards longer term partnerships for development.

The Communication was favourably received by the EU's Council of Ministers, representing national governments. It considered that local authorities in developing countries contribute to democratic local governance, and thus to poverty reduction, to inclusive equitable local development, and to provision of basic services especially for the poorest. The Council affirmed that local authorities "now occupy an important place among actors involved in development policy" and stressed their added value in development cooperation and in development education at home.

Most recently, the European Commission in October 2011 published a new Communication, "Increasing the impact of EU Development Policy: an Agenda for Change" which states:

"There is also scope for the EU to work more closely with the private sector, foundations, civil society and local and regional authorities as their role in development grows...

The EU should strengthen its links with civil society organisations, social partners and local authorities, through regular dialogue and use of best practices....The EU should consider ways of mobilising local authorities' expertise, e.g. through networks of excellence or twinning exercises."

Finally, we should not forget that local authorities have received some recognition as partners or “stakeholders” within parts of the UN system, in particular UN Habitat, in areas which relate to sustainable local development and development cooperation. UCLG is a member of the Working Group on Aid Effectiveness of the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD, and of the biennial UN Development Cooperation Forum, which is due to meet in plenary session in 2012.

Conclusion

The international community has from time to time given explicit recognition to the important role played by local government in development, and has on occasions positively encouraged partnerships and cooperation for development between local governments.

In several international fora, local governments have been recognized as development actors for some purposes, e.g. dialogue on development, but the recognition of them as full ‘actors for development’, including as actors in development cooperation, is more limited. Local governments are still often included alongside non-state actors.

In its earlier Position Paper on Aid Effectiveness, in 2009, UCLG called on the international community to recognize local governments and their associations as legitimate development partners. There is still a long way to go, and we should continue to press this as a key part of the advocacy strategy.

Recommendation

That UCLG draft a short inclusive definition, for use in its advocacy strategy, of the roles of local governments as actors for development.

Practical support for LG development cooperation

In practice, some UN agencies, some other international organisations (e.g. La Francophonie, the Commonwealth), the European Union, and a range of governments have provided or coordinated financial support to LG development cooperation, thereby demonstrating a practical recognition of its value.

As regards the UN, various agencies – notably UNDP, UN Habitat, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) - at different times have managed local government cooperation programmes for development, e.g. the UNDP’s Art Gold programmes. These are generally relatively small scale, and depend on specific donor support (national or regional governments, foundations).

Across the different parts of Europe, there are some relatively common elements to the way local government decentralised cooperation is carried out, but there are also big differences, which depend on culture, tradition, legal powers, and public expectations.

Scandinavia

In Scandinavia, there is a fairly standard model (save in Denmark where the LGA role is more limited). Local governments have their own twinnings and partnerships, created freely by them, mainly with other European countries. After 1989, many twinnings and partnerships were formed with cities and towns in the new Baltic states and other new democracies in central Europe. But when it comes to decentralised cooperation with partners in developing countries, this is largely

financed by specific programmes established by the national government's development ministry. The local authority usually provides its own contribution – the time and salary of its staff involved in the cooperation - but other costs are met.

In return, the general rules of engagement – the definition of the eligible countries, the thematic nature of the partnerships, the timescale and of course the maximum budget available – are set by the ministry, in consultation with the national association.

The role of the Scandinavian national association (or its daughter company) is mainly to inform the member municipalities of the government's programme and rules of engagement, to assess the applications, and generally to assist the local authorities who wish to be active in the programme. In Sweden, there are now two daughter companies involved; one helps the municipalities in the MIC programme, while the other (SKL) itself acts as a special type of local government consultancy, able to draw on local government experts from Swedish municipalities to work on larger scale projects.

North-west Europe

The overall picture is varied, but the approach is broadly similar to the Scandinavian model. That is, for development cooperation work, local authorities mainly act where there is a co-financing programme from their government or other sources.

This is the case in the Benelux countries (Belgium, the Netherlands). Belgium's local authorities are quite actively engaged, due to funding programmes provided by the federal government, and also - in the Flemish region - by the regional government, whose funding covers development education as well as international partnerships.

In the Netherlands, the substantial engagement of the Dutch local governments has been supported for over 15 years, on a significant scale, by the Dutch development ministry, in particular through the LOGO South programme, which received a very positive independent evaluation, and also the LOGO East (European) programme. In 2010, the position changed following a Parliamentary negative vote, and while the Dutch ministry still supports some LG development cooperation, it is (in 2011) more restricted in scope and in amount than before. The national association's daughter company, VNG International, plays an important role in supporting the Dutch local authorities, overseeing the government-funded MIC programme, and in its own right as consultant and technical adviser on LG programmes.

In Germany, there is no national programme to support development cooperation. Despite this, a substantial number of (mainly larger) cities have fairly active international partnerships with LICs. In the UK, the active involvement of local authorities appears to have declined in recent years, and the only (rather modest) government financing for LG development cooperation is channelled through the Commonwealth Local Government Good Practice Scheme by the development ministry.

In both the UK and Germany, in the absence of national programmes, the national association plays a role of supporting and encouraging their members, but overall, but this is on a lesser scale than in the Scandinavian or Benelux countries.

Southern Europe

In France, Italy and Spain, the picture is - in general terms - of a stronger autonomous activity in international cooperation by local authorities, with less active involvement of the national associations, apart from the FEMP in Spain. However, in both France and Italy, specialist local

government associations exist which support local authorities in their decentralised cooperation work, notably Cités Unies France (CUF).

The financial contribution of southern European local authorities to international development has in recent years been quite high. In Spain, many local authorities fund NGOs and other non-state actors to do their own projects, as well as carrying out their own LG partnership activities. The commitment to spend 0.7% of the local budget to international development purposes (mirroring the internationally agreed target for national donors) is strong in Spain, with the FEMP's support.

The French government supports local and regional governments' decentralised cooperation activities financially, and also through the Association internationale des Maires francophones (AIMF). In both France and Spain there is an increased coordination between the national, regional and local levels with a view to enhancing the overall coherence. In Italy, the central government expresses support for decentralized cooperation, but the activities are largely generated by the regional, provincial and local authorities themselves.

Central Europe

The members of the EU from central Europe have begun in recent years to support some local government international cooperation, mainly with LICs which border on or are close to the EU's frontiers, like Moldova, or the Caucasus countries.

European Commission support

Local governments' development cooperation is also financially supported by the EU, in particular since 2008 through the Non-State Actors and Local Authorities programme (NSALA), which provides (till 2013) around €30 million per year for local governments. Most of this is spent on in-country projects, decided by the EU's country delegations. The remainder is for a mix of multi-country LG partnerships for development, for development education actions in Europe, and for LG networking on development (the PLATFORMA network, providing the local and regional voice towards the EU's institutions, is funded from this source). As indicated earlier, the EU gives a very wide meaning to 'local government', including all subnational levels of government.

The PLATFORMA publication 'Decentralised Development cooperation - European perspectives' (2011) gives 16 brief examples of European LRG development cooperation activities:

<http://www.platforma-dev.eu/en/publicationEN.htm>

Canada

In Canada, there is almost no tradition of local governments taking part in individual twinnings or partnerships for development, on their own initiative. On the other hand, for many years the national LGA (FCM) has been funded by the development agency (CIDA) to carry out significant LG development cooperation programmes, in which individual Canadian municipalities and practitioners take part. So the programme approach, aiming at wider learning and a multiplier effect, is at the heart of the Canadian experience.

The FCM's core international programme is the CIDA-funded Municipal Partners for Economic Development (MPED), a five-year program (2010-15), with a budget of CAN\$24.2 million, with \$18 million from CIDA and the balance being in kind contributions from the LGs. It supports local governments and LGAs in Vietnam, Cambodia, Mali, Burkina Faso, Tanzania, Nicaragua and Bolivia to enhance their services in economic development. The programme also covers regional knowledge

sharing and global policy development and aid-effective programme coordination, and includes cross-cutting themes of environmental sustainability and gender equality.

Under MPED, FCM's traditional one-on-one municipal partnership model is evolving to include individuals from several Canadian municipalities working in teams with overseas experts on a single project. Also, country-level programs are designed and carried out in partnership with national LGAs in a co-management model, with a view to achieving sector-wide scaling-up of results. Together the MPED partners participate in regional and global networks for sharing good practices, policy dialogue, and programme coordination. The FCM also manages significant bilateral programmes in Haiti, Ukraine, and (beginning in 2012) the Caribbean.

Other governments

Some other national governments have contributed to local government development cooperation in different ways, in particular via financing UN programmes, or by contributing to the costs of programmes such as the Commonwealth Local Government Good Practice Scheme. The New Zealand government has also funded a scheme for LG capacity-building in Pacific Island states.

Conclusion

This brief overview shows that, in many countries, governments do recognize that local governments play at least some role as development actors, through their funding of development cooperation partnerships. This recognition is not always very explicit, however.

Most LG development cooperation work is currently funded mainly through national governments' development ministries or agencies, usually with a contribution in kind from the participating authorities. In some countries, the programme is specifically designed for local governments; in others, it forms part of a wider ministry budget line for civil society actors.

In a few HIC countries, notably the Netherlands, Canada, and (in different ways) France and Spain, the government (including in Spain the large regions) makes a significant financial contribution to LRG development cooperation. In other countries, the programmes are relatively modest, which limits their potential impact. There is a danger that, in some countries, the ongoing economic and fiscal crisis will lead to reductions in government support. The EU's NSALA programme is a positive addition, though quite complex in its formalities, and UCLG may wish to support Platforma's work to ensure a good LG programme is in place for the next EU budget period, from 2014.

8. Why local government matters

“Local authorities construct, operate and maintain economic, social and environmental infrastructure, oversee planning processes, establish local environmental policies and regulations, and assist in implementing national and subnational policies. As the level of governance closest to the people, they play a vital role in educating, mobilizing and responding to the public to promote sustainable development.” (*Agenda 21, 1992 Rio Earth Summit, UN Conference on Environment and Development*)

Members of UCLG are fully aware, of course, of why local government matters, and why local governments will play an even more essential role in future. But if we are to convince our national governments and the international community to support our international cooperation and partnerships for development, it is important to reaffirm some key points for our public advocacy strategy, whose main elements are examined in Part II below.

Wherever they are established, local governments perform, in essence, three broad roles:

- They provide the voice, leadership and ‘strategic vision’ for their city or locality, and its people;
- They provide or organise local public services essential for people’s well-being;
- They act as catalyst and drivers for the local development process, in all its dimensions, in partnership with other actors.

As we all face common global challenges (even if the intensity varies from continent to continent and country to country), as we progressively urbanize, as we become increasingly inter-connected, and as highly centralised forms of national government have proved increasingly ineffective, the importance of local government worldwide has steadily increased.

And in consequence, local governments across the world have the responsibility to develop and upgrade their own capacity and effectiveness, to develop strong systems of government and governance, to meet the development needs of their people. This requires them to learn from, and share experiences with, each other. That is why local governments’ international development cooperation is so important, and why our national governments and the international community should be firmly encouraged to support it. We briefly look at three key reasons why local government matters.

Because decentralisation and local democracy are essential to our future

In parts of the world, a relatively strong system of democratic local self-government has been a feature of the political system since the late 19th or early 20th century, though full universal suffrage often took many years of struggle to achieve. Elsewhere, however, systems of government were often highly centralized, with little local autonomy even for large conurbations.

But over the last 30 years, decentralisation policies have become the norm, even if the systems (and extent) of democracy vary. The trend has indeed been global, and covers countries with widely divergent GDPs. According to a 1999 World Bank study, out of 75 developing countries with populations of over 5 million, no fewer than 63 were carrying out decentralization policies, often anchored in national constitutions. Today, almost all Latin American and African countries have

forms of elected local government local government, and the new post-1989 democracies of central and eastern Europe all created systems of local democracy.

The Council of Europe's adoption in 1986 of the European Charter of Local Self-Government gave formal international expression to this trend for the first time, and many of the Charter's principles are also included in the Guidelines on Decentralisation and Strengthening of Local Authorities, adopted by UN Habitat's Governing Council in 2007.

There are many common reasons for this trend to decentralisation and local democracy:

- excessive centralism has been shown not to work efficiently and effectively;
- decentralisation enables political diversity within a country to be better expressed, and allows citizen participation to become a reality;
- urban governance and management are more complex in today's world, and need responsive local leadership;
- local governments are able to respond better and faster to citizens' needs and aspirations;
- decisions on public services can best be taken close to the ground;
- decentralisation, correctly implemented, enhances local economic and human development;
- (more cynically) devolving competences to a "lower" level of government sometimes enables central governments to divert public responsibility for difficult political decisions.

But for decentralisation to be successful, there are at least five essential prerequisites:

- There must be an effective, planned and progressive **process** of decentralisation, involving the new (or newly empowered) local governments and their LGAs as partners;
- There must be a transfer of sufficient **competencies** to enable the local government to play its role as service-provider and leader of the development process;
- The transfer of competences must be accompanied by adequate **financial resources** to enable the local government to carry out its tasks;
- The local governments must be able (and helped as required) to develop the necessary **human and technical capacity** to perform their tasks and provide effective leadership and administration;
- There must be a shared commitment, at political and senior executive levels, to the principles of good **local governance** and **inclusion**.

The first three of these conditions fall largely to central governments to deliver – and should be done in partnership with local government associations. In reality, central governments often fail to decentralise in a good way, either because of lack of will, or internal conflicts within government, or due to poor policy formation and implementation, and almost always, because there is a mismatch between competences (legal powers) transferred, and the resources available and devolved to carry them out.

The last two conditions – capacity development and local governance/inclusion – are largely the responsibility of local governments themselves. But these are often immensely difficult things to achieve, either because of the inadequate or incomplete process of decentralisation, or because there is simply a lack of human and technical capacity at local level, to develop the required new systems of government, administration, and governance. It is here that our partnerships and cooperation for development can play a crucial role in helping to achieve successful decentralisation and local development.

Because local governments deliver proximity, participation and partnerships

One of the key reasons to decentralise, and to establish local democracy and self-government, is to enable decisions to be made at the level closest to the citizen, and with the involvement of local people. Through their public participation systems, local governments enable citizens to take part in open and transparent processes to identify local priorities (e.g. strategic planning, development, service delivery, budget allocations etc.).

Local governments need also to have well-formed policies and systems of inclusion, to ensure that all sections of the community are able to take part, and that it is not just the voices of the better-off and more articulate that are taken into account. In these ways, local governments enable citizens to exercise what has been called “the right to the city.”

In addition, a framework of strong public involvement in local governance has the additional value of making public institutions more responsive and accountable, and strengthens the overall system of democratic governance of the country.

Local governments also play a key role in bringing all the local players together, including civil society, the business sector, and other institutions of the public sector, to drive the local development process, and to promote greater prosperity, social justice and inclusion.

Because changing demography and rapid urbanisation depend on good *local* leadership and governance

Whether we live in urban or rural settlements, we need good local government, playing its various roles positively. But dense and growing urban communities have a more direct and day-to-day need for and reliance on the services, infrastructure, planning and relevant regulation provided by the city government.

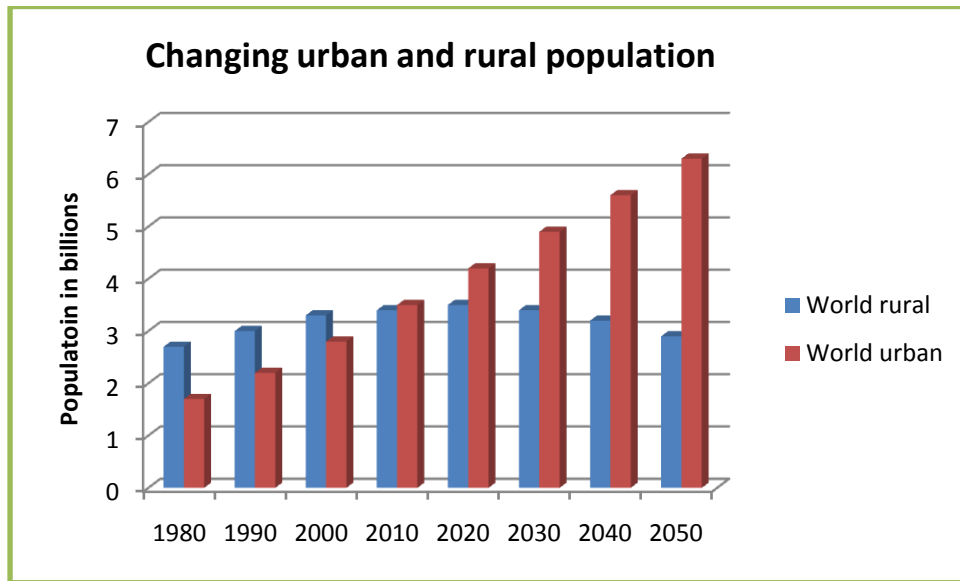
It is therefore no coincidence that the global trend to decentralisation also corresponds to the double demographic change – a rapidly increasing global population, estimated to have reached 7 billion in 2011, and an even more rapid increase in urbanization.

Chart 1 (see next page) shows the projected urban and rural figures from 1980 through to 2050, when the global population is likely to top 9 billion, or more than double the 1980 figure.

It is important to emphasize that the world’s rural population will also continue to grow until around 2020, and that even by 2050, it will still be around 2.8 billion. Rural communities and local authorities will continue to face their own set of challenges, not least the high levels of rural poverty and disadvantage, often accompanied by depopulation. Therefore, getting good quality local rural governance, development and service delivery will continue to be extremely important. The processes of urbanisation have profound consequences also for rural regions, with which they are economically and socially inter-connected.

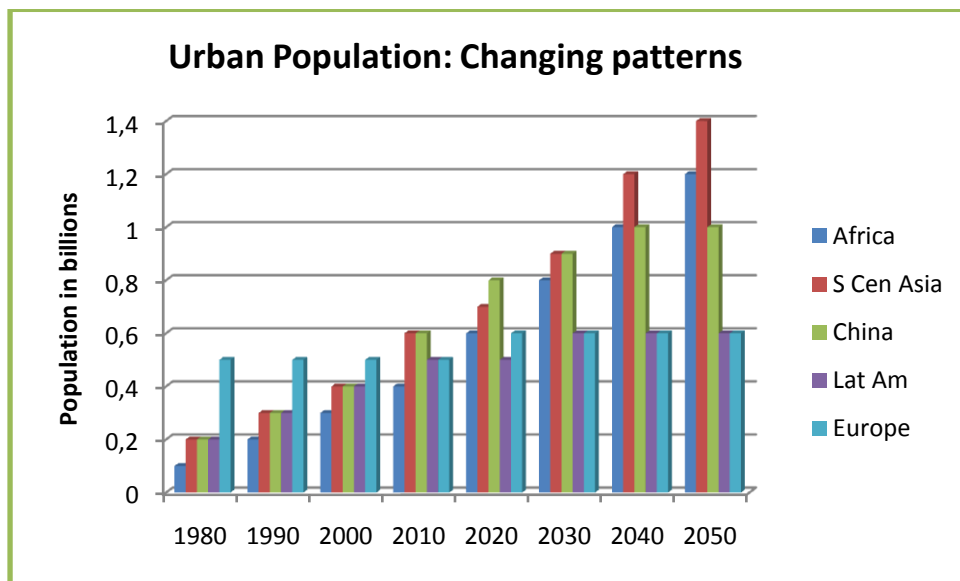
Some 90% of the projected urban growth is due to take place in lower income countries (LICs), so it is no exaggeration to say that if we are to achieve a successful and sustainable development globally, the key to this success will lie in the world’s cities and towns, especially in “the south”, where the problems and opportunities are the greatest.

Chart 1:



Source: UN DESA Population Division: *World Urbanization Prospects – 2009 Revision*

Chart 2:



Source: UN DESA Population Division: *World Urbanization Prospects – 2009 Revision*

Chart 2, also based on UN estimates and projections for 1980 - 2050, shows:

- The urban population of Europe, Latin America and (from 2040) China stabilize;
- Africa's urban population started as the smallest, but increases rapidly throughout the 70 years, and by 2040 will be second highest at nearly 1.2 billion (over double today's figure);
- South Central Asia (including India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh) also grows rapidly throughout, and will have the largest urban population from 2030, reaching almost 1.4 billion by 2050.

Fast-moving, complex cities and towns require political, managerial and technical skills and leadership, planning, management and technical capacity – with leaders in touch with and able to respond to the changing needs of their communities. Central governments have an important role to play in creating a positive legislative and financial framework – but cities must have a strong degree of local self-government if they are to develop and thrive.

Cities and towns are not islands. They are inter-dependent (“Systems of Cities” is the title of the World Bank’s 2010 urban strategy). They require strong, positive co-ordination – “horizontally” within and across their economic region, and “vertically” with other “levels” (orders, spheres) of government. They need to relate positively to their peri-urban and rural hinterlands.

The challenges for LIC city leaders and governments will be enormous in the coming decades. They will need to share and to learn, and to benefit from international cooperation and support. It is in our common interest to help them succeed.

Because local governments are the catalysts for local development

Implicit in all of the above issues is the fact that local governments are vital leaders, catalysts and agents of sustainable and integrated economic and human development – including the social, environmental and cultural dimensions. It requires enhancement of the social as well as physical infrastructure; the creation of an effective and inclusive local policy and planning, and the provision of essential public services - waste management, water, sanitation, social housing, transport, primary education and healthcare, for example, are mainly or often local government services.

The registration of births and deaths, of land rights and occupation ... all these are essential to underpin effective policies of development. Then there are the issues of social inclusion, urban planning, environmental protection...

As Kofi Annan, then Secretary General of the UN, expressed it to a UCLG mayors’ delegation in 2005:

“How can we expect to reach the MDGs, and advance on the wider development agenda, without making progress in areas such as education, hunger, health, water, sanitation and gender equality? Cities and local authorities have a critical role to play in all of these areas....While our Goals are global, they can most effectively be achieved through action at local level.”

This developmental role is sometimes made explicit, for example in South Africa’s Constitution, which requires municipalities to give priority to the basic needs of the community, to promote the economic and social development of the community, and to participate in national and provincial development programmes. Or take Peru’s constitution which provides (Article 188) “Decentralization is a continuing process whose purpose is the overall development of the country.”

PART II – DEVELOPING THE ADVOCACY STRATEGY

Who does UCLG aim to influence or persuade, what are our objectives, what are our key messages, who are our allies and opponents, and what are the means and opportunities for achieving our objectives? These are at the heart of any advocacy strategy, and in Part II we seek to provide answers, at least in outline. And finally, what role should UCLG play?

9. Who are the main ‘targets’, what are our objectives?

There are at least three types of ‘**target**’ for UCLG’s advocacy strategy on LG development cooperation:

- Those who create the international and national policy frameworks for development assistance and cooperation, within which LG development cooperation has its place;
- Those who fund, or may fund, local governments’ development cooperation;
- Local and regional governments themselves, subdivided into those who already take part (improving practice etc.), and those who do not yet do so.

In the questionnaire, we asked respondents to rank a set of possible ‘targets’ for the strategy. In ranking order, these are:

- National governments
- Bilateral donors
- Local and regional governments themselves
- UN Agencies

There was some support for aiming the strategy also at NGOs, as potential allies. Respondents also proposed the EU (which deals both with policy and funding), the OECD (which deals with policy issues on development assistance), and the private sector (which might also be seen as a possible ally in some cases).

Respondents were also asked to rank the main **objectives** of the advocacy strategy, which came out as follows:

- To get recognition of LG development cooperation as a positive public policy
- To persuade donors to provide more, well-funded LRG programmes
- To influence international development policies
- To advocate for direct access of LRGs in the ‘south’ to finances

Other objectives suggested by respondents were: to strengthen LGAs at national, regional and international level, and to achieve a political consensus and commitment for decentralisation.

One other suggested objective – to be a partner with a seat at the table with international organisations – received little support, and perhaps is better seen as a means to achieve goals, not as an objective itself.

We should also note that the questionnaire did not propose any objectives for UCLG’s strategy towards local and regional governments themselves. Since local and regional governments are seen as an important target group, we need to decide what objectives we should have for this. There seem to be two important ones:

- To persuade more LRGs to take an active part in development cooperation;
- To improve practice and effectiveness across the whole sector, both for those who are already active, and for those who are just starting to be involved.

In fact, this last objective – improving practice and effectiveness – is one that should not only relate to local and regional governments, but should in fact be a ‘macro’ objective for all of our advocacy, and towards all ‘targets’. For donors/funders also have a major contribution to make to overall quality and effectiveness through better programme design, as well as by increasing the level of support.

Recommendations

UCLG’s advocacy strategy should be mainly directed towards national governments, other bilateral donors/funders, relevant international organisations (e.g. OECD) and UN agencies, and the community of local and regional governments, which include their representative LGAs.

The main objectives should be:

- ***To get local and regional governments recognized as actors for development, including through their international cooperation for development;***
- ***To enhance the quality, effectiveness and impact of LG development cooperation, through improvements in policies, practices, and programme design and scale;***
- ***To increase substantially the volume of financial support for LG development cooperation programmes, and the number and range of governments and donors who invest in this sector;***
- ***To obtain more direct financial support for cooperation available to LGs in lower income countries (LICs), including “south-south” partnerships;***
- ***To ensure that donors’ programmes take account of the specific role and reality of local governments, and that programmes address local government priority needs;***
- ***To promote more and better decentralisation, with the involvement of LGs and LGAs at all stages, and using LG development cooperation as a significant support mechanism;***
- ***To the above ends, to influence international development policies which relate to LG development cooperation; and***
- ***To persuade more LGs to take part in development cooperation partnerships and activities.***

10. Key messages for governments and other funders/donors

Any advocacy strategy needs to have a set of relatively simple key messages, which encapsulate much more complex underlying positions, but which enable everyone to understand the essential issues and 'asks'.

We invited respondents to the questionnaire to propose recommendations to governments and donors, covering both policy issues and ways of improving practice in LG development cooperation. We received around 50 individual suggestions, which can be broadly grouped into the following main 'messages' towards governments and other donors:

The future is local, the future is increasingly urban – work with us to help manage and plan our cities, towns and territories

The world's population is growing fast, 7 billion in 2011, over 9 billion by 2050 – and most of this growth will be in urban areas, of different sizes, but mainly in Africa and southern Asia. Governments are decentralising to local and regional levels, but resources rarely match the responsibilities devolved to us, nor the needs of our communities. Meanwhile, we face global challenges and crises, which hit hardest and first at local level. Local governments wish and need to work together, and with the international community and national governments, to ensure that together we can rise to these challenges.

Local governments are essential democratic leaders and agents of local development in their communities

LGs everywhere, but especially in lower income countries, have a key role as democratic leader, strategic planner, service deliverer and catalyst for local development, with their communities and partners. They help to meet the MDGs and tackle extreme poverty. But they also need assistance in performing these complex tasks.

The role of LGs will be increasingly important as more countries decentralise more deeply, as the world continues to urbanise, and as global challenges have an increasing impact at local level. How well local governments can perform their tasks will have a huge influence on the quality of life of billions of people.

Local governments are significant public 'actors for development' in international cooperation

Local governments should be recognized as *agents of local development* in their own territory, and as significant *actors for development*, in international cooperation.

They work with NGOs, the private sector and organisations of civil society, but are sometimes looked on by funders as being part of civil society, or as playing a development role akin to NGOs. This is wrong – the roles are complementary, but distinct.

LG development cooperation is legitimate, effective and merits support

Local governments play, and should play, an international role; they have for over 50 years cooperated internationally; this is beneficial for their own communities, and makes a positive, continuing contribution to international development and understanding. We must not go backwards on this.

LG development cooperation is a positive public policy, and should be recognized as such; there should be clear enabling national legal frameworks for its realisation.

LG development cooperation achieves positive results and outcomes on the ground

There are many cases studies which demonstrate both the diversity and the value of LG cooperation. These are set out, for example, in the UCLG Position Paper on Aid Effectiveness (2009), and in the PLATFORMA publication (2010) 'Decentralised development cooperation - European perspectives'.
<http://www.cities-localgovernments.org/publications.asp>
<http://www.platforma-dev.eu/en/publicationEN.htm>

We need more, better-targeted and better-funded programmes for LG development cooperation

Many current programmes are not specifically designed for local governments, or with an understanding of how they work and how they can contribute. There should be specific funding programmes designed to match LGs' specific role and contribution, on which they are consulted.

While local governments have many roles and competences, e.g. local economic development, water and sanitation, waste management, to which cooperation can and does contribute, the issue of governance should remain a central theme, and capacity-building should be understood as making an effective front-loaded contribution to local development.

In general terms, we need scaled-up programmes that have a strategic dimension, in which groups of partners can work on an agreed set of themes, addressing local government priorities, and enabling replication and cross-learning.

Provide more support to local governments in lower income countries, to help their development cooperation activities

At present, most funding for LG development cooperation comes from 'northern' governments or agencies, and is channelled through LGAs and LGs in high income countries. This can cause an imbalance in the relationship, which could be overcome if more such funding is progressively directed- where capacity allows - to the LIC partners, and where appropriate, through their LGA. This would accord better with the Paris principles of ownership and alignment.

LG development cooperation helps to make decentralisation work successfully

Donors often provide financial support to decentralisation at national level, but much less so to ensure the policy's success at local level – which is where it stands or falls. Even if the necessary resources are devolved to carry out the new tasks – which is rarely the case – local governments need help to build their local capacity to perform them, and to put the principles of good governance into practice. Local governments from other countries, who deal with similar issues, are best placed to provide this assistance.

Understand and use the added value of Local Government Associations

Local Government Associations (LGAs) in lower income countries have really important roles to play, but need resources and stronger capacity to maximise the benefits they can offer. They should be partners of central government and donors, in planning and implementing decentralisation processes. They should be involved in coordinating LG development programmes within the

country, and in disseminating lessons learnt. Donors should include LGAs in their programmes, wherever possible, and provide support to specific association capacity-building (ACB) programmes.

Support cooperation for development between local governments from lower or middle income countries (“south-south”)

Often, the most relevant and effective exchange and learning can be between cities and local governments that share similar socio-economic challenges, or where one LG partner has recently experienced a major development trajectory from which the other can learn. This cooperation between LGs from lower and middle income countries (which may be with or without a HIC partner) merits and needs stronger support.

Recommendation:

To agree the following key messages to governments and other donors:

- ***The future is local, the future is increasingly urban – work with us to help manage and plan our cities, towns and territories.***
- ***Local governments are essential democratic leaders and agents of local development in their communities.***
- ***Local governments are significant public ‘actors for development’ in international cooperation.***
- ***LG development cooperation is legitimate, effective and merits support.***
- ***LG development cooperation achieves positive results and outcomes on the ground.***
- ***We need more and better-targeted programmes for LG development cooperation.***
- ***Provide more support to local governments in lower income countries, to help their development cooperation activities.***
- ***LG development cooperation helps to make decentralisation work successfully.***
- ***Understand and use the added value of Local Government Associations***
- ***Support cooperation for development between local governments from lower and middle income countries (“south-south”)***

11. Key messages for local and regional governments

Since the other main target group is our own community of local and regional governments, we need to clarify our key messages towards them. Once again, the questionnaire asked for proposals on this – on ideas for improving practice, on the principles that should guide LRGs in development cooperation, and on what messages we should use to encourage them to take part. And again, around 50 separate proposals were received which have been distilled into the following main ‘messages’.

Taking part in LG development cooperation brings benefits to both partners – and contributes to a more international perspective

While the partner in the LIC countries stands to gain a stronger organisation, better services, and a better basis for playing its developmental role, the HIC partner usually gains in more subtle ways, through staff professional development, by involving its own local communities, and by demonstrating and developing a positive open and international attitude. Together, the partners tackle the local impacts of global challenges, and demonstrate their co-responsibility for achieving development.

LG development cooperation has the greatest impact when it is part of a coordinated larger programme, delivering agreed goals for development for a local area and community

Many local government twinnings and partnerships start as one-to-one links, freely chosen by the partner municipalities, and these can often make an important contribution. But experience shows that a far greater impact can be achieved when the cooperation involves a grouping of local governments, coordinated in a network or single programme, with an agreed set of public development objectives for the region or country in question. In this way, learning and results can be shared and replicated more easily, and the LGA can often play a strong coordinating role.

Make sure you have a strong professional approach to your development cooperation

If a local government is serious about its development cooperation activities, it must ensure that those involved in both managing the partnership and in delivering the professional or technical work, have a strong professional approach, and receive relevant training. This can be helped by creating national or trans-national professional learning networks for staff from different local governments involved in international cooperation.

Maintain a strong focus on results and outcomes, based on a locally-owned agenda

If local governments are committed to making a real impact, and if they are to gain wider support from funders and donors for their development cooperation, then it is essential that, from the moment of conception of a project, all partners have clear set of shared objectives and intended results, based on a locally-owned agenda, and a methodology for monitoring and evaluating progress during and after the end of the project. A lack of such clarity, or of accountability for results, has been a weakness in some partnerships, and as a sector we need to overcome this.

Ensure you have political support for your cooperation activities, but don't be politically partisan

Local governments are by definition politically led and international cooperation partnerships are usually politically agreed, if not politically inspired. Such support is important if the cooperation is to be sustainable and resourced, but if the political support is too narrow, a change in political control

can lead to a sudden withdrawal of support. It is also important not to allow the partnership to be seen to be in any way serving politically partisan interests.

Involve your partners, widen your basis of support and participation

Whilst the local government is at the heart of the development cooperation, and some activities may only involve professional municipal staff, others will involve local civil society, and perhaps also the local private sectors, schools, and other sectors. Migrant or diaspora communities can play an important role in giving support to the partnership, and in some of its activities. In any event, international partnerships are stronger when they benefit from a wide range of local support and participation.

Be committed to continuing improvement, learning and exchange

Local government partnerships for development are by their nature in constant evolution, with new problems arising, new individuals engaged, new technologies becoming available... In addition, there may be other partnerships working in a similar field, facing similar challenges. Therefore a commitment to share and learn from each other is essential, beyond the lifetime of a single project. LGAs and LG networks can usefully create forums where successes and obstacles can be discussed. Once again, if LG development cooperation is to gain wider traction among the international community, we need to show that we are constantly on the look-out to improve our practice.

Recommendation:

To agree the following key messages to local and regional governments:

- ***Taking part in LG development cooperation brings benefits to both partners – and contributes to a more international perspective.***
- ***LG development cooperation has the greatest impact when it is part of a coordinated larger programme, delivering agreed goals for development for a local area and community.***
- ***Make sure you have a strong professional approach to your development cooperation***
- ***Maintain a strong focus on results and outcomes.***
- ***Ensure you have political support for your cooperation activities, but don't be party political.***
- ***Involve your partners, widen your basis of support and participation.***
- ***Be committed to continuing improvement, learning and exchange.***

12. Building alliances

In any advocacy strategy, one of the essential issues is to analyse who are your allies, and who are those who will resist or oppose your aims; and to adopt strategies and tactics to broaden the base of support, mobilise allies, and seek to win over or neutralise the impact of those opposed.

At this stage, it may be too early to define, with any certainty, all of the potential 'supporters' and 'resisters', in relation to UCLG's central 'asks'.

For UCLG, the first issue may be to analyse who are the committed supporters inside the broad umbrella of the organisation. The CIB Working Group and the DCCD Committee provide a strong institutional basis for this analysis.

More difficult is to identify those from the wider community of local governments and LGAs, who are not involved in UCLG but may be mobilised to take a stronger position in support of the advocacy strategy.

In assessing other potential allies, we need at minimum to look at:

- Sympathetic international/UN agencies and organisations, e.g. OECD, UN Habitat;
- Parts of the EU and other world regional bodies, known to be sympathetic;
- Sympathetic governments and bilateral donors who have shown an understanding of the value of LG development cooperation
- International and continental organisations representing NGOs and civil society organisations;
- Foundations committed to democratic local government;
- Networks and associations of local and regional governments, at all levels.

In assessing those unlikely to support our main objectives, we know from long experience that there are national governments opposed to any international activities or activism by local governments, but the bigger problem is likely to be a passive lack of interest, rather than active opposition, making it hard to make progress. This tendency to 'negative passivity' may be stronger in the context of the economic and fiscal crises affecting many so-called developed countries.

Recommendation

That the CIB Working Group and DCCD Committee examine the issue of likely or potential allies and opponents, to be included when the advocacy strategy is taken to the next stage.

13. Taking the advocacy strategy forward

The first step is for the CIB Working Group and the DCCD Committee to look at the issues and recommendations in this Policy Paper.

If the recommendations in this paper are accepted, and in particular if the main elements of the advocacy strategy outlined above are agreed, then a methodology and timetable will be required, to focus initially on the next 2 years, 2012 and 2013.

- Which international events can UCLG participate in to promote its messages, and what is the most effective way of doing so?
- What other opportunities exist or can be created to lobby key 'targets'?
- Does UCLG wish to organise one or more events around the themes of the advocacy strategy?
- Does UCLG wish to develop a 'branding' and specific communication tools to promote the strategy?

In 2012, there will be a series (as usual) of international major events with a development focus, for example the UN Rio+20 event (June 2012), also the UN's Development Cooperation Forum whose biennial plenary session is in 2012.

Within the European Union, 2012 and 2013 will be important in securing a new local government programme for the next 5 or more years. UCLG can work with PLATFORMA and other allies on this opportunity.

In addition to externally organised events, does UCLG wish to consider (having regard to resources) organising its own major conference on the future of LG development cooperation? Could it get co-sponsorship? Such an event could be an opportunity to attract a wide participation from funders, allies, partners and practitioners, and a forum to get our key messages across both to potential funders, but also to the community of local and regional governments.

Recommendation

That UCLG consider the best ways of taking forward the advocacy strategy, having regard to external opportunities, and to consider possible UCLG-organised opportunities to promote the agreed objectives and messages.

14. The future role of UCLG

UCLG's governing bodies have, of course, the formal responsibility for adopting policy positions and for approving the overall advocacy strategy in the field of development cooperation, as in other fields.

Moreover, in the CIB Working Group and the Development Cooperation and City Diplomacy Committee, it has means – at practitioner and political levels- for maintaining an ongoing exchange and overview of developments.

Respondents to the questionnaire were also asked for views on possible future roles for UCLG in this area, and several proposals were put forward, which include:

- Acting as a full partner of relevant UN agencies, World Bank, OECD etc.
- Maintaining a strong dialogue with multilateral agencies.
- Coordinate joint activities.
- Create and maintain an overview of who is where, doing what.
- Create an overview of different approaches and methodologies, including management of partnerships.
- Be a source of practical information, not only declarations, principles, calls etc.
- Coordination and research, to help improve practice.
- Coordination, network building, information sharing
- Provide models and instruments, systematize and diffuse information.

From this, we can distill at least three key potential roles:

- **Advocacy and representation:** Taking a full and active part in dialogue with the international community, as partner and participant;
- **Information and learning:** Research, information provision and professional development on LRG development cooperation, with a focus on good practice and improvement;
- **Coordination:** Networking and coordinating with the diverse community of local and regional governments, keeping up to date with activities and changes.

In practice, this means that the World Secretariat, the CIB Working Group and DCCD Committee need to work closely together to ensure that these roles are fulfilled.

The CIB Working Group pages of the UCLG website already provides a considerable amount of useful information, but its visibility is not great within the site, and this could usefully be enhanced to help the organisation perform these three roles to best advantage. Of course, some tailored resources to work on these issues would also help greatly to upgrade UCLG's capacity.

Recommendation:

To discuss the possible future roles of UCLG, and its component parts, in promoting the organisation's own capacity and effectiveness, and in taking forward the advocacy strategy.