

We are pleased to present you with the latest news of the UCLG's Committee on Urban Strategic Planning.

**1. Included in the update is the following: An overview of the UCLG international learning exchange meeting on Strategic Urban Planning (Durban)**

**2. Outcomes of the meeting**

- Sketching new Mentoring partners
- Supporting UCLG on policy, information and documentation

**3. Institutional and financial sustainability for the mentoring programme**

**OVERVIEW: UCLG international learning exchange meeting on Strategic Urban Planning**

Gathering over 120 delegates from about 20 countries, the event was hosted by MILE (Municipal Institute of Learning) and UCLG in Durban, from 13 to 15 June. The theme was about 'fostering learning of the global south'. Experiences were shared in 4 different languages which include: English, French, Portuguese and Spanish.

The event was officially opened by the newly elected Mayor of eThekweni Municipality, Cllr. James Nxumalo, who made an impassioned plea for strong political leadership in the process of urban strategic planning. He also emphasized the need for greater collaboration, as opposed to competition within the global south.



The first two days were dedicated to exchanging experiences between practitioners, according to five sub-themes summarized below. The third day of the meeting was dedicated to deepening and widening mentorship and partnership opportunities, with the intention of establishing concrete commitments and offers that could be involve in the programme.

**SESSION 1 ON VISION, INSPIRATION AND LEADERSHIP:** The need to move beyond short term

planning, to adopting a more longer term lens to planning was a common theme in all inputs. Delegates mentioned that proactive and successful strategies need to be incorporated in the long term vision of cities. City to city cooperation was acknowledged to be important, but the need for proper, dedicated institutional vehicles to capture learning and disseminate these in an accessible manner to as many cities as possible was more important. It was also noted that dedicated vehicles like MILE need to be supported to upscale and popularize lessons learned.

**SESSION 2 ON PLANNING AND SOCIAL INCLUSION:** From each of the presentations we learned about interesting housing upgrading projects that showed how communities were involved as part of various cities commitment to social inclusion, particularly in Brazil. It is assumed that, as a result of such projects, social ills have decreased. Whilst the provision of such infrastructure is important, "it is perhaps not so much about counting the hardware and physical infrastructure, but focusing on the software", as wella delegate stated. We were reminded that WHAT we learn from each other is NOT as important as HOW we learn, becauseplanning processes take a long time, and the contexts differ very much.

**SESSION 3 ON PLANNING AND ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION:** Whilst the presentations were very diverse with different entry points, there were some key highlights on relationship between planning and economic transformation and its relevance to different contexts, such as multi-dimensional strategies produce multi dimensional results, and the trajectory is often more important that the content. The challenge is how to measure the economic dividends of our strategic planning and physical planning activities. Strategic planning should be seenas a sharp and focused TOOL to re-imagine a new economic order.

**SESSION 4 ON PLANNING AND SPATIAL TRANSFORMATION:** It was noted that whilst we are seeing planning as a tool for spatial transformation, spatial reordering in itself is a tool for development and economic transformation. Despite the particular unique contexts there seems to be some common issues:

- Urban regeneration is fundamental, in creating quality living environments and this is an important precondition for spatial transformation.
- Regulation was highlighted as an important notion in all cities. From a donor point of view, having a clearly documented plan is important.

**SESSION 5 ON FINANCING STRATEGIC PLANNING:** An interesting observation was made that there is

great value in in our cities for our people to live in.. The question to be asked is how we unlock this value. In summary, there are five key areas that were identified, namely: (1) Every strategic plan needs a financial plan, (2) Cities need to prioritize the plan, and know what is needed now and what is needed later, (3) Cities need to know how to enhance funding options: and which organizations to approach for funding, (4) The notion of credit worthiness was key: whether open market funds or others, local Municipalities need to have a good credit worthiness status and (5) Within the context that we operate in, it was noted that it is impossible to ignore the reality of the growing informality, and hence we need solutions that are not traditional in nature.



## Outcomes of the meeting

### • Sketching new mentoring partners

In Latin American cities and specifically Brazilian, their experiences are very relevant for African cities. The learning event involved 4 Brazilian cities and 1 region collectively willing to be part of the mentoring programme. Cities that initially offered to become mentors were: Sao Paulo, Porto Alegre, Belo Horizonte, Salvador, Cape Town, Lagos, Sevilla and the association of municipalities surrounding Santiago de Chile, Ciudad Sur.

Porto Alegre and Sao Paulo offered to organize learning days on their practical experience in the context of the Metropolis congress in November. Thematically the demand on knowledge is high in relation to planning and housing, particularly on informal settlements.

### • Supporting UCLG on policy, information and documentation

The USP Steering Committee Members decided to offer support to UCLG in some crosscutting issues:

1. Planning and climate change. Besides a punctual input through a flyer, Durban wanted to cooperate on briefing calls for all UCLG members to encourage the COP process and documentation.
2. Urban Planning of informal settlements: Slum upgrading and land regularization
3. Further, the proposal of the Brazilian cities to outline ideas for cooperation and meet in the context of Metropolis congress was considered
4. The Municipal institute of Learning MILE offered to intensify cooperation with UCLG on knowledge enhancement for cities in the African region

## Institutional and financial sustainability for the mentoring programme

The current project CityFuture is supported by the Ministry of Norway and UCLG will look for a possible extension to the existing contact and/or partnership. Besides this project, it is important that cities and mentorship look and channel options for additional funding.

Options for support to projects can be explored through the following initiatives:

- [Brazilian and French programme on decentralized cooperation to the benefit of Haiti and Africa](#)
- [Metropolis Initiatives](#)
- [Programa Municipia](#)
- [Catalytic fund of Cities Alliance](#)

### • Support of other networks and partners to upcoming activities

Other networks and organizations supporting UCLG upcoming activities include "Architects without borders" that are designing programs and planning tools to Mozambique and have already started a pilot project of a "Plan Base" development for the municipality of Lichinga. The network AERYC also offers support to African cities that are keen to apply for projects through the Municipia program mentioned above. Furthermore, during the event, UN Habitat and Plus Network also offered punctual support on project design.

**The UCLG's Committee on Urban Strategic Planning acknowledges the municipality of Ethekwini, MILE, Metropolis, AFD, Caisse des Dépôts and SALGA for supporting the successful meeting held in Durban, as reslived in the previous meeting held in Mexico.**

**Presentations files and the meeting reports can be downloaded [here](#) or alternatively on the MILE website: [www.mile.org.za](http://www.mile.org.za)**