



## SÃO LEOPOLDO AND PORTO ALEGRE DECLARATION INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR OF THE FALP NETWORK 23, 24 AND 25 NOVEMBER 2017

According to the United Nations, 54% of the world's population is concentrated in metropolitan areas. Furthermore, according to this organization, around 70% of the planet's inhabitants will be living in urban areas by 2050. This is an unseen urban revolution.

Cities concentrate in them, situations of tension, new conflicts, and also important challenges that raise serious questions concerning the current urban development process. Metropolitan areas are complex territories where externalities lead to marginalization, exclusion and inequality.

To a large extent, the future of cities depends on the capacity for these and local authorities to face up to urban transformations in the coming years.

Our cities, our populated areas, were built on the fringes of the main urban centres in the world and are on the front line of asymmetries in urban growth. Our cities are in some ways, border areas: visible and invisible economic, social, cultural, ethnic and religious frontiers that firmly question the Right to the City for all.

Decades of hegemony of an exclusive social and economic paradigm have deepened social fragmentation in urban peripheries and these have been associated with industrial development and factories, producing a region of separation marked by the emergence of ghettos and urban violence.

However, we see that peripheral cities have a decisive role in the future of metropolises and the development of inclusive territories. Peripheries today are defined as places of opportunity to reduce inequalities and generate means of governance that offer a solution to the complexity of the democratic exercise in 21<sup>st</sup> century cities.



The Forum of the Peripheral Local Authorities (FALP - Fórum das Autoridades Locais de Periferia) has, over these 14 years, set up a useful and necessary voice in the international setting, which introduces a new political perspective in the way of constructing cities. Our commitment constantly forces us to rethink the boundaries of the urbanization model. Peripheries, not just as a space, but also as a concept, mean that a city is never designed in advance and is never finished either. The Right to the City must be permanently redefined and strengthened given the growing social demands.

The FALP network, which came about under the World Social Forum of Porto Alegre, has come a long way in collective construction. Amongst dozens of important international meetings, we can highlight the following: the 1<sup>st</sup> FALP held in Nanterre (France) in 2006, the 2<sup>nd</sup> in Getafe (Spain) in 2010, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> in Canoas (Brazil) in 2013; the General Meetings in Pikine (Senegal) in 2011 and Moron (Argentina) in 2015. All of these gatherings added to the legitimacy and credibility of peripheral local authorities in the global municipal movement, calling for supportive, democratic, sustainable and polycentric cities.

We, peripheral cities, claim and demand:

### **1) Polycentric metropolitan areas that ensure a right to centrality for all.**

Over the coming years, metropolises should be planned from the periphery and not from the centre, as has been the case until now. Polycentrism allows us to better manage urban growth and also enables peripheral cities to obtain funding that is indispensable for housing, access to public services, education and health.

We, peripheral cities, strive to be sustainable cities, generating opportunities for jobs and local economic development, and not just remaining dormitory towns. For this reason, it's necessary to have interconnected territories using a quality public transport network that ensures the right to mobility for all.

In this way, we wish to have more supportive territories based on the redistribution of the wealth generated in the metropolitan arena.

### **2) More participative and democratic metropolitan areas with an integrated and decentralized space.**

Exercising democracy is not just about electing representatives for a given term. Democracy happens by re-establishing power in citizenship and fostering political participation.



Metropolises need to encourage active citizenship, a commitment by all stakeholders in the city and must be transparent to regain the trust of the inhabitants.

Furthermore, governance of metropolitan areas requires several means of horizontal cooperation between the municipalities that constitute them. Spaces for dialogue and participation with the various levels of government should be set up to allow the development of government policies that are close to the citizens.

### **3) More inclusive metropolitan areas that permanently strengthen and recognize new rights for social justice.**

When faced with the different forms of urban violence, ranging from violence against women to institutional violence, to the violence generated by the capitalist economic system, metropolises need to address these issues in a comprehensive manner and not just through a repressive perspective of criminalizing the peripheral populations.

Metropolises must acknowledge the new cultural identities that are emerging in the peripheries. The periphery is an opportunity for the city and not the other way around.

### **4) Peripheries are the territories of the future, for cities.**

Our cities' youth population brings the necessary dynamism and vitality to build innovative and fair metropolitan areas.

At the same time, these young people from the periphery, suffer on a daily basis from various forms of discrimination owing to social condition, sexual orientation, ethnicity or religion. Young people are the first victims of the liberal economic choices that create lack of employment and opportunities.

### **5) National policies for the metropolises**

We demand the creation of national policies in our countries for supportive, sustainable and cooperative metropolitan regions, where no one is overlooked and there are no invisible populations or territories. The policies of central governments today foster segregation and competition between cities.

### **Present and future commitments.**

We are fully committed to implementing the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN-SDG) in our cities, metropolitan areas, localities and territories. By implementing the New



Urban Agenda and the Global Platform for the Right to the City, we can reaffirm that for many years now, our cities have been developing policies and actions that favour and provide access to public transport to the poorer and more vulnerable populations in our countries.

The fulfilment of the goals and objectives contained in these documents are fully in line with our vision of the world, where our care is focused on reducing inequality. Yet we want to go further and dare to speak of overcoming inequality and all means of social, political and cultural oppression in the world. We want a world where quality of life, cultural diversity and well-being are a right for everyone.

In this sense, we join the efforts of the struggle for housing, the right to immigration and the commitment to the UCLG Global Charter for Human Rights in the City.

With the aim of carrying the voices of these peripheries and invisible populations that a large share of the world insists in ignoring, we seek to develop an international agenda for activities, events and debates that will contribute to maintain our on-going struggle. We will be united in carrying out parallel and integrated activities during:

- The World Urban Forum in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 7 to 13 February
- The World Social Forum in Salvador and Lauro de Freitas in Bahia from 13 to 17 March 2018.
- The World Water Forum and the Alternative World Water Forum in Brasília from 18 to 23 March 2018
- The African Cities Congress in Brazzaville, Congo in October 2018

In order to be organized at a regional level and to facilitate our integration, the FALP network has defined five benchmark cities to organize our actions in the four corners of the globe where our network is active: Nanterre, France, in Europe, São Leopoldo, Brazil and San Antonio de Areco, Argentina, in South America, Pikine, Senegal, in Africa and Aizaria, Palestine in the Middle East.

We decided to set up a plan of action to periodically publish articles and texts in the official and alternative media, of our local authorities, to spread our network's way of thinking, diversity of opinions and political experiences. As well as to expand and consolidate



Decentralized Cooperation projects between our cities in order to bring our populations closer and to qualify the public policy management tools through the exchange of know-how.

**The official voice of the peripheries in the global municipal movement.**

We wish to strengthen the presence of peripheral cities at the UCLG, ensuring a significant political presence in all its bodies with the characteristics and guidelines that have distinguished our network's 14 years in operation. As acknowledgement of the legitimacy, credibility and political relevance of the FALP network, the UCLG (United Cities and Local Governments) has invited our network to be an integral part of its organizational structure as the UCLG Forum for Peripheral Cities, which does not change the way we work and operate on the international scene. We are pleased with the official recognition of FALP as the official voice of the peripheries in the global municipal movement.

As a network of local authorities, FALP is permanently in dialogue with the academic world, social movements and other important stakeholders that enable understanding and are active in building more supportive and poly-centric metropolitan areas for a better world, which begins in the cities.

During this international FALP seminar held in São Leopoldo and Porto Alegre on the 23rd, 24th and 25<sup>th</sup> of November 2017, we reaffirmed the fact that the future of metropolises cannot be decided without the voices of our cities, quarters and populations. This popular voice is the guarantee for building supportive, democratic, sustainable and polycentric metropolises.

São Leopoldo, 25 November 2017.