

# urban and territorial governance

*"But precisely because it has to be strong, central government ... has to free itself from the jobs that require local knowledge, local decisions and local action"*

Peter F. Drucker, Landmarks of Tomorrow, 1957

## FUELING THE DEBATE

- Do local governments have the necessary technical and financial resources to implement their legal responsibilities?
- How is participatory democracy fostered at local level?
- What instruments do local governments have to coordinate and work with civil society and private sector?
- What role should cities play in the process of building a global agenda?

## CURRENT CONTEXT

Habitat I (1976) and Habitat II (1996) made no specific reference to urban governance or the need for strategic planning policies. However, in 1997 it was declared that "correctly planned and managed cities are the future of human development".

The Habitat Agenda calls for an 'enabling environment' characterized by: the decentralization of responsibilities and resources to local governments according to the principle of subsidiarity; civil society participation; the use of partnerships (including with the private sector); and the capacity-building of those involved in decision-making and urban development policy.

## THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Too often, role of local governments in development is debated by states and negotiated with investors and donors without local governments themselves being part of the conversation. This seems to lead to decentralization and a local development agenda "in lieu", rather than "in support" of a local urban and territorial governance system.

In this context, there is growing consensus that, to actively contribute to the achievement of the post-2015 goals, cities need to have a greater role in local development planning and management, with broader access to resources and a more decentralized governance structure.

## MAIN CHALLENGES

Cities must address many challenges related to urban and territorial governance, particularly a lack of capacity, increasing scarcity of financial resources and dysfunctional relationships between levels of government.

### Main needs



improve **organizational structures**, systems and procedures to manage public resources



take on **more responsibilities** in social and environmental policy-making and service provision



**legal frameworks** and mechanisms to facilitate collaboration with other levels of government, the private sector and civil society



**more resources** for decentralization, especially in low-income countries



enhance active citizenship and **participatory governance**



improve **strategic planning** to manage territories and make urban growth more sustainable

## KEY OPPORTUNITIES

### At global level



Strengthen the involvement of local and regional governments in global affairs



Strengthen intergovernmental coordination, multilevel partnerships and new technologies

### At national level



Promote decentralization and local self-government



Acknowledge the role of urban policies

### At local level



Strategically planning the territory



Strengthen management through participation