

Regional Consultation on the localization of the post-2015 Development Agenda

1.0 Executive Summary

This regional consultation was held in Liverpool on 17th of June 2014 and organized by UCLG. There was strong representation of local governments and their associations across the world, including both elected representatives and practitioners. The session opened with presentations from the consultation co-leaders (The Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments, UNDP, and UN-Habitat), which were followed by some opening statements from a number of elected representatives, after which the debate was opened up to the floor. The main issues raised were: the challenge of communicating the relevance and universality of the international development agenda at local level; the need to strengthen local sources of financing for development; the role of decentralized cooperation between territorial authorities as well as innovative ways of South-South and North-South-South cooperation; intergovernmental coordination challenges and the risks of top-down approaches; the role of culture in development; and local economic development and tackling unemployment as priority areas for local stakeholders. Participants called for improved communication of the international agenda, bottom-up priority setting, increased financing for the local level, continued international cooperation between territorial governments and strengthened coordination from the local level with actors from national and international levels in both communicating and implementing the agenda.

2.0 Description

This regional consultation was held in Liverpool on 17th of June 2014, piggybacking on the BT Global City Leaders Summit and the UCLG Executive Bureau, which gathered sub-national leaders from around the world in Liverpool on 18th and 19th of June, respectively. The meeting was organized by the UCLG World Secretariat and held in the Liverpool city council chamber. It was chaired by the CLGF Secretary General, Carl Wright, and was attended by representatives from all three of the consultation co-leaders (Global Task Force, represented by UCLG Secretary General, Josep Roig, UNDP, represented by Gemma Aguado, and UN-Habitat, represented by Diana Lopez).

3.0 Quantity and Quality of Participation

The session was attended by 57 people, of which:

- a. 14 were women (25%)
- b. 24 were representatives of local government organizations
- c. 0 were representatives of sectoral ministries and other national level bodies in the territory
- d. 29 were representatives of networks and/or associations of local and territorial governments including representatives of associations of mayors, associations of local and regional provincial governments etc.
- e. 0 were representatives of Civil Society Organizations, such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working at the sub-national level, faith-based organizations (FBOs) and community based organizations (CBOs), representing women, youth, people with disabilities, the elderly, internally displaced people, religious groups, indigenous peoples, migrants, etc.
- f. 2 were representatives of development cooperation partners active at local level, which includes bilateral donors, UN Agencies, decentralized cooperation, among others.
- g. 2 were representatives of local academic institutions and relevant research institutes.
- h. 0 were representatives of the private sector including chambers of commerce, local cooperatives, Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) sector, local businesses and entrepreneurs, Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) associations, etc.

4.0 Record of Proceedings

a. Process/Methodology

The session began with an introduction from CLGF Secretary General, Carl Wright and UCLG Secretary General, Josep Roig, who explained the importance of localization and the work that CLGF, UCLG and the Global Taskforce have done to advocate for localization throughout the post-2015 consultation process, starting with the High Level Panel (on which sat UCLG President, Kadir Topbas) and continuing with the campaign for a stand-alone goal on sustainable urbanization and the localization of the targets and indicators

for all goals. Gemma Aguado from UNDP then explained the implementation consultation process, followed by Diana Lopez of UN-Habitat, who introduced the details of the localization consultation in particular. There were then statements from four pre-selected speakers, followed by an open debate.

b. Issues Raised

Issues raised include:

Communication and ownership – a number of speakers admitted that the MDGs were nearly ever mentioned in their council chambers and that, if they had been, it would have been difficult to explain their relevance. This is a big risk with the post-2015 agenda. The importance of communicating the universality of the agenda (future SDGs relevant for countries all over the world) in order to have governments and CSOs involved and engaged was highlighted. **Richard Kemp, Liverpool City Councilor, UK:** “The UN is seen as distant, another world. Sometimes we have difficulty relating to national governments, let alone international institutions. We don’t see the goals as part of our daily work, even when they are. In fact, Liverpool a poor city in UK terms and at least 12 of SDG goals related to our work, but this not communicated at local level. What are we going to DO about it in THIS council chamber?” **Lawrence Yule Chair of CLGF, Mayor of Hastings and President of Local Government New Zealand** – “as a mayor I never heard of the MDGs or talked about them in a council chamber. The inclusion of local government in global conversations is an exciting opportunity for us to change this for the SDG. Important for us to share best practices and learn from each other – this will reinforce importance and relevance of SDGs on the ground.” **Mpho M W Moruakgomo President Botswana Association of Local Authorities** agreed that is necessary to better understanding of international goals among local governments, and also advocated involving civil society and the private sector. **Roland Schäfer, Mayor of Bergkamen** said it is necessary to break down global goals to local level and transform them into operational targets. We shouldn’t rely on national governments to do this. UCLG regional sections communicate this to national associations

Local financing and capacities building – Antonio Zurita, Andalusian Fund of Municipalities for International Solidarity (FAMSI) acknowledged that there has been an important jump in recognition of cities in post-2015. But decentralization is not always accompanied by resources and finances. Decentralization shouldn't be about passing on responsibilities (problems) without the means to solve them (financing). He also recognized the importance of counting with territorial platforms to facilitate the coordination of actors at local level and the understanding of the global agenda by LRGs. **Alain Le Saux, Secretary General, Metropolis** argued that funding is paramount. Local authorities with the means to do so have demonstrated that they meet citizen needs. 70% of costs of MDGs were borne by local level, but decisions were centralized. There was not enough funding for implementation of MDGs. Corruption also an issue – are funds being misspent? MDGs can be implemented if corruption is tackled, particularly at local level. UCLG campaign against corruption at local level might help? Decentralization key to implementation and improve daily life. **Fathallah Oualalou, Mayor of Rabat** said that the 15 years of urbanization ahead will be a big challenge. We must decentralize and recognize the power of local authorities and the means they require – funding (sharing fiscal power), real estate and land (public spaces, community spaces), training (of women and men). These will enable local authorities in Africa to respond to the new agenda.

The role of decentralized cooperation and new forms of South-South and North-South-South cooperation to promote dialogue and exchange of best practices and experiences for the localization of the agenda.– **Berry Vrbanovic Mayor of Kitchener, Canada** sub-national governments have unique skills, knowledge and resources – complementary to those of other actors. Often at the vanguard of international cooperation and has a proven impact. To do: recognition of local government as key actors in development cooperation, provide adequate funding for them to participate (e.g. 20% of all global funding), and a framework to guarantee local government participation in decision making on peer to peer initiatives. **Célestine Ketcha Courtès, Mayor of Bangangté, Cameroon** highlighted the role of European actors (Agence de l'Eau Seine de Normandie...) in decentralized cooperation and pointed out that

her municipality didn't just receive money from them. It had to set up and implement the project over 3 years with a volunteer working on our technical services capacity – the transfer of skills is paramount. **Nomveliso Myukwana, Emalahleni Municipality, South Africa** pointed out that donors have their own priorities. They need to understand that the space, priorities and leadership are local. LGA support in capacities is helpful, as was the support of the Netherlands Association of Local Governments (VNG) in capacity building. Most important issue is to recognize and address local priorities. Then we must measure and monitor progress. Also, partnerships between experts can be useful (e.g. Dutch water engineers). and they can pass on the messages to local governments themselves.

Intergovernmental coordination challenges and the risks of top-down approaches. The importance of counting with mechanisms that foster the alignment of international cooperation with the priorities and needs expressed by local actors was highlighted. The need of foster coordination and better understanding between local governments, national governments and the international debate was raised by several participants. **Célestine Ketcha Courtès, Mayor of Bangangté, Cameroon**, pointed out that lack of consultation with local governments leads to waste and tackling issues that are not local priorities. She gave the example of a drinking water supply project which suffered from lack of consultation and coordination of local elected and between local, regional and national level. After the implementation of drinking water supply project, the central government sent them funding in order to establish a rig in an already organized network.

Culture and its vital role in development at local level: further integration of marginalized groups can be achieved by acknowledging and making visible and the particular cultural characteristics of these groups The recognition of the cultural dimension of development can be a pillar to advance better governance at local level. **Secretary of Culture, City of Mexico Eduardo Vasquez Martín**, underlined the absence of a clear definition of culture in SDGs or understanding of its role in development. This leaves gaps in collective understanding. In terms of who is marginalized, this often has a cultural element.

E.g. in Mexico there are half a million indigenous people, but there is no urban service dedicated to them. They are invisible and there is no social awareness of them. First step of integration is to make them visible, and this is has a cultural element. In terms of building sustainable cities and public spaces, this also has a cultural element- cities are historical phenomena – the ‘vertical’ city of historical layers. Not just archeology, but a living thing that must be recognized. Development can also be understood in terms of cultures of peace – a lack of dialogue between cultures can lead to conflict, violence, inequalities, and a lack of access to rights.

Local economic development and tackling unemployment – essential priority areas to drive improvement across all goals. Local economic development was put as an example of a specific instrument of set of tools that can facilitate the implementation of the Post 2015 at the local level. **Nomveliso Myukwana, Emalahleni Municipality, South Africa** said her municipality has made strides in MDGs (education, gender equality) as it had a national plan. Unemployment a huge challenge as these people depend on the government. Youth, women, disabled and other vulnerable groups are even more at risk of poverty. Economic development must be localized – local production leads to job production – thus we need skills at local level. Main issues for us are funding and skills. How can we attract and retain skilled workers? **Antonio Zurita – Andalusian Fund of Municipalities for International Solidarity (FAMSI)** also highlighted local economic development as part of the agenda – if there is no social development, water, housing, local institutions, there is no quality of life. BUT if there isn’t employment, none of these things will help. Local governments have many potential roles to play in local economic development – these must be recognized and harnessed.

5.0 Conclusion and Way Forward

Across all of the areas discussed, a common theme was that sub-national governments are already working on the ‘implementation’ of many of the focus areas of the post-2015 Agenda. The challenge is to identify and communicate the links between this work that is already being done on the ground, and international goals targets. If local leaders

are able to see the post-2015 agenda as a reflection of their own priorities, they will take on the international agenda as their own.

There was resistance to top-down models of policy making and priority setting, and an insistence that improved results will depend on improved resources at local level. However, it was recognized that efficiencies may be possible with improved intergovernmental and multilevel coordination and local participation and accountability. It was equally recognized the importance that this consultation has been set up in the first place, to highlight the importance of the local dimension of development and that local governments and their associations have been invited as partners and co-organizers, the only non-UN group that has had this opportunity.

There was enthusiasm for the role of international cooperation between local governments, both bilateral and through organizations such as UCLG and other international development institutions. As well as traditional development cooperation and capacity building, it was argued that UCLG has a role to play in digesting and communicating the international agenda for its members, in order that they can understand and operationalize it in their communities.

6.0 Appendices

Appendix A – The list of participants.

Appendix B – Programme outline

Appendix C – Presentations where applicable