

# URBAN GOVERNANCE

**Urban governance** is the software that enables the urban hardware to function. It is the enabling environment requiring adequate legal frameworks, efficient political, managerial and administrative processes, as well as strong and capable local governments to respond to the needs of citizens. Local governments are instrumental in urban governance and are the key levers in ensuring inclusive and sustainable urban development, accountable and transparent city management, and a dynamic process of engagement with a wide range of stakeholders.

## THE CHALLENGE

- Local governments are struggling to deliver basic services due to inadequate institutional and financial frameworks, resulting in failure to tackle issues of informality, poverty alleviation and efficiency in public management.
- Developing the ability of local and territorial governments to govern the city with the appropriate governance frameworks and with transparent and inclusive processes in urban management aimed at addressing people's needs.
- Deficiency of functioning, collaborative and multi-level governance systems between central, territorial and local governments.
- At the global level, local governments have insufficient visibility, **voice and representation in international decision-making processes**, where they are essential stakeholders in respect to service delivery and poverty reduction.

## UN-HABITAT'S APPROACH

UN-Habitat has the specific mandate within the United Nations System to act as a focal point for local governments and their associations at the metropolitan, regional, provincial and other territorial government levels. UN-Habitat places emphasis on the role of local government as a key player in the development processes as reinforced by the Rio+20 Declaration "The World We Want". Through its Local Government and Decentralization Unit, UN-Habitat works closely with both central and territorial governments to establish mechanisms of institutional dialogue aimed at empowering local and regional governments

through a fair distribution of responsibilities and resources by:

1. Developing **multilevel and multiscale governance arrangements** designed to improve policies, institutional and technical frameworks, and tools that place local governments at the centre of sustainable urban development.
2. Fostering **transparent and accountable local governments** in order to improve municipal management and service provision.
3. Supporting local governments to adapt to and take full advantage of new opportunities offered by **SMART technologies to improve municipal institutional and financial sustainability**, creating opportunities for a more active citizenship.
4. Supporting the **United Nations Advisory Committee of Local Authorities** (UNACLA), the representational body of the major local government networks, bringing their voice and perspectives to the UN System.
5. Advocating for **the role of local and regional governments in global processes**, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda, and supporting the work of the Global Task Force of local and regional governments.
6. Promoting **the local implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals** where results cannot be achieved without the active participation of the local level.

**250,000**

is the number of local and territorial governments in the world today, they constitute key institutional drivers for development and levers of change in the promotion of inclusive growth

**149 over 193**

member states experience today local democracy as a tool for service delivery and better respond to the demands of local communities

**Less than 10%**

is the average share of expenditure by local governments vis-à-vis central government expenditure in Sub-Saharan Africa. The same percentage amounts to 24% in Europe

## IMPACT

- **Inclusion of local governments' voice and perspective in global agenda discussions**, as part of the continuous advocacy for localizing the post-2015 Agenda (13 countries engaged, more than 4,200 participants mobilized) and development of a Toolbox for Localizing the SDGs soon available at [www.localizingtheSDG.com](http://www.localizingtheSDG.com)
- 130 cities have participated in the **Urban Governance Survey** ([www.urbangovernance.net](http://www.urbangovernance.net)) building a global database on current models of urban governance for public dissemination, comparative policy and research analysis.
- 100 partners are learning from each other and **sharing concrete solutions about SMART technologies** applied to municipal innovation and citizenship via the Uraia platform ([www.uraia.org](http://www.uraia.org)).
- 30 needs assessments on **transparency in municipal management** have been conducted at international events where mayors and urban leaders identified key challenges and proposed innovative solutions.
- A set of publications on **Unpacking Metropolitan Governance** has been developed and specific technical assistance is provided to requesting countries and metropolitan areas to help them improve coordination and inter-municipal cooperation.

CONTRIBUTING TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



The Local Government and Decentralization Unit works to promote the local implementation of all the SDGs, promoting the local dimension of development.

BENEFICIARY VIEWS

“We need to put implementers at the centre of Habitat III. We need institutions that are able to deliver, based on real knowledge about the needs of all inhabitants, including those living in informality.”

Statement to the Plenary Session of PrepCom2 delivered by **Jacqueline Moustache-Belle** on behalf of UCLG and the Global Taskforce.

DONORS AND PARTNERS

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URBAN GOVERNANCE FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

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