UCLG Congress – World Summit of Local and Regional Leaders: Tuesday, 12 November 2019

The United Cities and Local Government (UCLG) World Summit of Local and Regional Leaders convened on Tuesday to complete a round of preparatory and networking meetings ahead of Wednesday’s official opening.

Local4Action Track
Culture Driven Public Policies: This session was organized by the UCLG’s Culture Committee, Culture 21, a global platform of cities, organizations, and networks on learning and cooperation on a “culture of sustainable cities.”

The session was moderated by Soham El Wardini, Mayor of Dakar, Senegal, who described culture as the beginning and end of all development. Onur Eryüce, Izmir, Turkey, discussed the ancient role of the Mediterranean port city as a cultural crossroads, and work with UCLG to rejuvenate the city’s cultural community. Mariana Flores, Mexico City Government, explained the city’s adoption of an understanding of culture as a vehicle for democracy and development.

Chae Jong Hyub, Jeju City, Republic of Korea, described Jeju’s collaborations with the UCLG Culture Committee and Asia-Pacific Committee on Culture in supporting and hosting cultural events with young artists from around the world. Jean Pierre Elong Mbassi, UCLG Africa and African Capitals of Culture, described the importance of Africa’s re-appropriation and re-positioning of its cultural legacy, and the role of

A Dialogue led by Sheela Patel and Asna Falú: UBUNTU
Advisors: Ana Falú, co-founder of the Women and Habitat Network of Latin America, of the Centro de Intercambio y Servicios para el Cono Sur Argentina (CISCAS), and Sheela Patel, Chair, Slum/Shack Dwellers International, led this dialogue on the tension between the deep inequalities experienced by women and the right to the city. They discussed: confronting cities with the voice of women who
experience urban life in distinct ways; deconstructing the
gendered construction of private/public spaces and divisions
of labor, including the territory of the body; and recognition of
women’s experience of time, and the importance of regulatory
steps to value “invisible” non-paid work. They also explored
the failure of city governance to address the lives of women in
the informal economy; the strategic importance of documenting
their presence in the city; and women leading the long-term
challenges to, for example, claim safe spaces to assert their
identity and participate in their liberation.

Training on Sustainable Mobility: Moderator José
Dionisio González, International Association of Public
Transport, explained the objectives of the session to share
experience and good practice about public – and multimodal
– transport options. He outlined desirable characteristics and
functions of a public transport authority, including: long term
vision, decision-making power, and the right institutional
framework and governance system.

Kim Won-Ho, Director/Senior Research Fellow, Seoul
Institute, demonstrated how an alternative to private transport
became an imperative due to increasing traffic congestion in
Seoul. He illustrated how public transportation has been made
as convenient and safe as possible and showed how greening
urban spaces had increased land value.

Quentin Champauzac, City of Strasbourg, France, shared
examples on rebalancing the modal share through different
policy interventions, public bicycle campaigns, multimodal
transport options, and demand management. Discussions
revolved around tools for promoting public and multimodal
transport, the “uberization” of urban transport, and moving
from private vehicle ownership to transportation-as-a-service.

Is Urban Policy Working for You?: Rafael Forero,
UN-Habitat, moderated the session. Ellen van Selm, Mayor,
Opsterland, the Netherlands, underscored the need to make
linkages between rural and urban planning, noting that cities
can learn a lot from rural strategies, which are geared to
innovative, participatory approaches, because many facilities
are not easily accessible.

Highlighting a regional perspective, Agustí Serra Monté,
Secretary of Urban Habitat and Territory of the Generantat,
Catalonia, Spain, explained that piecemeal urban development
resulted in disparity and incoherence, and added that the
regional policy aimed at addressing these issues.

Nomkita Fani, Intermediary Cities and Spatial Planning,
South Africa, highlighted challenges arising from urbanization,
and policies aimed at reversing inequalities, citing that, on average, 40% of the population lives 40 kilometers away from economic opportunities and spends 40% of their income on transport.

Edgardo Bilsky, UCLG, pointed out that by 2050 close to 70% of the global population will be living in urban areas, adding that 65% of the SDGs can only be achieved at the subnational and local level. He noted that “metropolitization” is resulting in shrinking intermediary cities, which are key to territorial development and pointed to a mismatch between devolution of responsibility to local governments and sufficient resources to implement the urban agenda.

**Safe Public Spaces:** This session was moderated by Puven Akkiah, eThekwini Municipality, South Africa.

Sibongiseni Mkhize, Chief Whip, eThekwini Municipality, South Africa, stressed the importance of putting people first in the design, implementation and monitoring of public spaces. Ayanda Roji, City of Johannesburg, South Africa, discussed efforts by the City Parks programme to move away from a focus on criminalization, highlighting initiatives that: engage homeless people to map public spaces; introduce art and gaming programmes to co-design spaces with children and young people; and collaborate with local boxing clubs and businesses.

Debora Gambetta Paier, UN-Habitat, explained that the Safer Cities approach had evolved from standalone interventions towards inclusive design and city-wide strategies, citing Medellín’s library parks as a good practice in this regard.

Barbara Holtmann, UN-Habitat, stressed that the concept of green spaces cannot simply be transplanted from affluent areas into contexts where “social behavior is influenced by scarcity,” underscoring the importance of meeting multiple local needs. She expressed concern that the growing privatization of security services further undermines the emergence of safe spaces in marginalized areas.

Moderator Puven closed the session by outlining how reimagining public spaces from a safety lens contributes to, among other benefits: building local economies; transitioning from a “livable to a loveable” space, and increasing local ownership.

**Peripheral Cities:** This session was moderated by Djamel Sandid, Coordinator, UCLG Peripheral Cities. Abdoulaye Thimbo, Mayor of Pikine, Senegal, explained that despite proximity to the Dakar metropolis, where most residents work, the city receives a much lower allocation of resources for basic services. Lia Brum, World Secretariat – Metropolis, stated that metropolitan areas share many of the challenges of adjacent peripheral areas, noting the need to harness the leadership of peripheral cities in designing joint solutions.

Mohamed Sefiani, Mayor of Chefchaouen, Morocco, and President, UCLG Forum of Intermediary Cities, stressed that cities of all sizes are critical in achieving the New Urban Agenda and the SDGs.

Patrick Braouezec, President, Plaine Commune Metropolitan Region, France, explained that increased investments to the area during the 1998 World Cup had created hope among deprived communities, stressing “we have not lost our faith in building a true local identity.” He highlighted two key challenges as policies of segregation and exclusion that push people further out to the periphery, and growing inequalities between metropolitan areas and smaller rural towns that are being gradually emptied out.

In an interactive exchange, panelists stressed that many peripheral cities are also intermediary cities with distinct identities, and should not be viewed as “buffer zones” for absorbing negative externalities from big cities. Brum reported on the recent launch of UCLG’s metropolitan indicators, noting they can contribute to polycentric governance by enhancing access to data on demographic trends and resource allocations.

**Human Rights and Right to City: What emerging priorities for local governments?** This panel was organized by the UCLG Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights, and the Catalan Fund for Development Cooperation. The moderator Patrick Braouezec, Co-Chair, UCLG Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights, provided an overview of human rights in the context of the city.

Annie Chrystel, Limboung, Deputy Mayor of Libreville, Gabon, reminded participants that women’s rights were not included as specific human rights until 1993. Imen Ouardani, President, UCLG Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights, and the Catalan Fund for Development Cooperation, shared experiences with emerging democracy, wherein the recent democratic transition had introduced municipal elections, constitutional and legislative reforms to promote local democracy.

Fernanda Hassem, Mayor of Brasilia, Brazil, said that municipal government’s responsibility is to ensure that people have education, health, hygiene and a chance to safely participate in democratic processes. She also stressed that while guaranteeing basic needs is necessary, it is not enough to ensure the right of the people in the city. Nelson Fernandez, Director of International Relations and Cooperation, of Montevideo, Uruguay, argued for a differentiated approach to account for people’s varying abilities and diverse backgrounds. In the
ensuing discussion participants highlighted the importance of rural urban linkages, the need to recognize and promote social and solidarity economy approaches, stressing that cities are for the people and not just for companies and entrepreneurs.

**Partnerships for Urban Equality:** Michele Acuto, Connected Cities Lab, University of Melbourne, Australia, moderated the session.

Highlighting KNOW (Knowledge in Action for Urban Equality) Programme, Caren Levy, University College London, UK, noted that the New Urban Agenda has to be context specific and aligned with sustainability and resilience, which means working across sectors and identities in cities, and forging partnerships of equivalence that entail a mutual respect for rights and different kinds of knowledge.

Yvonne Aki-Sawyerr, Mayor, Freetown, Sierra Leone, elaborated on an inclusive and integrated approach to urban development in her city, which had experienced rapid growth following the end of the civil war in 2001. She explained that the integrated approach to "Transform Freetown" consists of 19 targets, working with external partners and partnerships on inclusion, integration and breaking down silos.

Annelis Maria Marical Gonzales, Cuba, highlighted efforts to improve the institutional framework, planning, and urban land management in Havana and participation through the Terra Vida national plan, aimed at improving resilience of human settlements.

Participants then broke out into two working groups to reflect on how partnerships helped build pathways for urban equality and the implementation of global agendas in the two cities.

Discussing urban equality in the global context, William Cobbett, Cities Alliance, observed that there is no common understanding of cities, different interests are at play, and not all partners are equal.

Fatmata Shour, Activist, Sierra Leone, recited a poem “Life in the slum… still I rise.”

**Forum for Intermediary Cities:** This session was convened in the context of the UCLG Forum on Intermediary Cities, a biennial consultation and policy development process, led by the City of Chefchaouen, which has given its name to the Declaration-Charter of the Intermediary Cities of the World. Raissim Ari, Mayor of Nevsehir, Turkey, noted his municipality’s collaborative approach to creating a liveable, cleaner and more aesthetic city. Kontxi Odriozola Eizaguirre, Barcelona, highlighted the role of the World Forum in underscoring the role of “supralocal cities,” illustrating the complex challenges by citing Barcelona’s delivery of common service standards – aligned to Agenda 2030 – to a diverse provincial population.

Hassan Fatih, Ministry of the Interior, Morocco, described how the Charter will contribute to a global framework for intermediary cities, stating they need not be in competition with metropolises.

Carlos Martinez Minguez, Mayor of Soria, Spain, linked the recent political turmoil in France and the United States to the demands of citizens that they should not be forgotten. He emphasized that human and environmental sustainability must go together and called for a bottom-up, sociological transformation.

Mohamed Sefiani, Mayor of Chefchaouen, Morocco, called for multilateral funding for intermediary cities facing critical development challenges. Jake Elder, Bloomberg Associates, described a number of projects in support of cities seeking resources to tackle climate change. Joan Chicón, Terrasa, and Albert Garcia Macian, Mollet del Valles, Spain, presented research findings from a UCLG working group on social and regional justice. Macian called on intermediary cities to join in declaring a climate emergency ahead of the next Forum.

Philipp Heinrigs, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), presented findings from a report, Africopolis, on urbanization in Africa. José Manuel Ribeiro, Municipality of Valongo, outlined work on participatory budgeting, noting its role at a time in which representative democracies lack trust and elites struggle to engage with citizens.

**Cities4Migration:** Lamine Abbad, International Center for Migration Policy Development, moderated the session.

Mounir Elloumi, Mayor, Sfax, Tunisia, explained that his city is hosting refugees, many of whom are young people.
from sub-Saharan Africa, while other migrants see Sfax as a transit point. He pointed to the absence of a legal framework on migrants, meaning that, for example, they are not allowed to work, and highlighted initiatives to ensure central government takes action to pass the necessary law to accommodate the migrants.

Ümit Şahin, Deputy Mayor, Sancaktepe Municipality, Turkey, highlighted the Syrian refugee crisis, noting that two out of three Syrians have migrated to Turkey and that refugees were changing the infrastructure of the city. He said that employment opportunities and legal assistance are being provided.

Ryan Manzie Macualey, UN-Habitat, provided an overview of the City Migration Profiles, being implemented in nine countries, aimed at increasing the knowledge base on urban migration and nurturing a peer-to-peer dialogue to support mutual learning on specific urban challenges.

Mohammed Sadiki, Mayor, Rabat, Morocco, provided the migration context for his country, explaining that it is no longer viewed as a transit point as many migrants have chosen to settle.

Luiz Alvaro Salles Aguiar de Menezes, City of Sao Paulo, Brazil, highlighted a 2016 municipal law on migration and the establishment of a municipal council for immigrants. Citing challenges to effective inclusion, he noted the lack of decent work opportunities and the need to improve migrant governance and provide adequate and affordable housing.

Mohammed Boussraou, UCLG, moderated the second panel discussion.

Nonceba Agnes Molwele, Councillor, Johannesburg, South Africa, explained that xenophobic attacks are linked to poor service delivery with migration being the responsibility of the host and sending cities. She outlined steps to dismantle remnants of apartheid spatial planning, noting that challenges associated with migration did not make it easier.

Emilio Rabasco, Fondo Andaluz de municipios para la solidaridad internacional (FAMSI), explained that Andalucia in Spain is an entry point for migrants from Africa and highlighted collaboration with Morocco that includes establishing a network of more than 60 local governments to tackle migration issues.

**Raising National Ambition on Climate: Raising Climate Ambition:** This session explored the role of cities in developing Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and Long-Term Emissions Reduction Strategies. The session was moderated by Adrian Fenton, C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group.

Chumisa Thengwa, eThekwini Municipality, South Africa, outlined Durban’s Climate Action Plan (CAP), noting it was one of 12 cities worldwide to develop such plans and the first in Africa to do so.

Steven Bland, UN-Habitat, discussed the role of multilevel governance in achieving climate targets, stating a 2016 study of 164 NDCs found 113 plans had a strong urban content. He cited legal action taken by Cape Town against the national government’s energy policy as illustrating the importance of vertical integration in climate policy frameworks.

Maryke Van Staden, Director, Bonn Center for Local Climate Action and Reporting, ICLEI, highlighted how its organization of more than 60 Talanoa dialogues had helped articulate the role of national governments in CAPs implementation.

Bev Esslinger, Federation of Canadian Municipalities, discussed Edmonton’s decision to declare a climate emergency in August 2019, noting the aim was to increase the level of ambition and build momentum from the ground up to enhance climate action.

Mohamed Sefiani, Mayor of Chefchaouen, Morocco, and President, UCLG Forum of Intermediary Cities, pointed to the potential momentum that can be generated by the world’s 30,000 intermediary cities, but stressed achieving impact on climate action requires a structured dialogue with national and regional governments, as well as technical assistance to develop bankable projects.

Jantine Kriens, CEO, Association of Netherlands Municipalities, discussed the network’s role as a knowledge broker in national climate dialogues, but noted that municipalities still lack power to implement internationally-agreed targets.

Other issues raised in the discussion included the need to integrate both vertically and horizontally through multi-sector climate initiatives; address unintended consequences of climate plans; and ensure translation of global targets into just and equitable climate action at the local level.

**LocalActionHub**

The role of Agenda 2030 in Creating Citizenship: How can local governments use the SDGs to connect with their citizens?: Carla Rey, Secretary General, Italian Association
for the European Council of Municipalities and Regions, moderated this session organized by UN-Habitat and the UN Development Programme (UNDP). Johannes Krassnitzer, UNDP, shared that Agenda 2030 is an important tool to help rebuild trust and social cohesion at the local level. He called for the active engagement of citizens in the design, implementation, and monitoring of complex policies.

Diana Lopez, UN-Habitat, stressed the importance of involving marginalized youth and vulnerable groups in co-creating their future.

Miquel Rodríguez Planas, Commissioner of the 2030 Agenda, Barcelona City Council, shared that people around the world are concerned about climate change, cyber security, and terrorism, and emphasized the need to show to the public how policy responses relate to Agenda 2030.

Federico Poitier, World Enabled, reflected on mechanisms for inclusive citizenship and argued that it is important to not overly complicate language so as to get more people engaged.

The ensuing discussion uncovered examples of local SDG co-creation from the city of Mannheim, Germany.

**Special Session**

**Future of Equality – Beijing+25:** This session consisted of two panel discussions. Lucy Slack, Deputy Secretary-General, CLGF, moderated the first panel.

Thenbi Nkadimeng, President, SALGA, reflected on the progression of gender equality in South Africa, with female local government representatives now serving in central government. She underscored the need to enhance the self-esteem of female politicians given the challenges they face.

Carola Gunnarsson, Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), observed that many inequalities addressed during the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing 25 years ago still persist today. She pointed to a backlash against gender equality, stressing the need to make a strong statement looking towards the 64th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW64) in March 2020.

Rohey Malik Lowe, Mayor, Banjul, The Gambia, noted that many gender policies have been ratified but not implemented, highlighting inequalities in political leadership and economic diversity. She called for women to support each other and referenced the Network for Locally Elected Women of Africa (REFELA), aimed at inculcating a culture of gender equality.

Evgenia Lodvidova, Vice Mayor, Kazan, the Russian Federation, elaborated on the political structure in her region, stating men occupied the majority of political positions and for every 100 men only 79 women are employed. She noted, however, that representation is improving and gender equality forums in Russia are contributing to this.

Noraini Binti Roslan, Mayor, Subang Jaya, Malaysia, explained that she was the first female mayor, appointed in 2015, and that an action plan is now in place to create the first female friendly city in Malaysia.

María Cristina Grunaue de Falú, National University of Tucumán, Argentina, moderated the second panel discussion.

Marianne Overton, Vice Chairperson, Local Government Association, called on participants to support the CEMR Standing Committee for Equality statement from ULCG to be presented to CSW64, on Beijing+25 and Agenda 2030, and expressed hope that they would be adopted at the UCLG.

Fatimetou Abdel Malick, President, Nouakchott Regional Council, Mauritania, highlighted several obstacles that also hinder the development of women and efforts centered on mobilizing civil society and providing support and work for peace and development of the women in the region.

Fatouma Awaleh Osman, Mayor, Djibouti City, Djibouti, read out a message from the chairperson of REFELA, articulating challenges faced by women and progress made to date. She noted that Beijing+25 is an opportunity to renew and review the Beijing declaration and relaunch its action plan.

Participants gather for the Financial Management Committee Meeting.