



UCLG CONGRESS  
WORLD SUMMIT OF LOCAL  
AND REGIONAL LEADERS



# Inclusive and Accessible Cities

#CitiesAreListening  
Town Hall Track

Policy Papers



**CITIES FOR ALL**  
GLOBAL CAMPAIGN ON INCLUSIVE  
AND ACCESSIBLE CITIES

## #CitiesAreListening

The 2019 Congress and World Summit will mark the way towards the follow up of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the first review of the New Urban Agenda in 2020.

It will consolidate the policies that UCLG has been promoting within its strategic plan, with a strong focus on localizing the SDGs, aiming at leaving no one, and no place behind, with a key focus on local governments as representatives of communities and for communities, and keeping the four UCLG Policy Councils issues as key pillars.

Special attention will be paid to creating a space of structural dialogue with other constituencies and stakeholders and in particular civil society. For the first time, the outcome will not only be a declaration, but a corpus of integrated policy recommendations resulting from a consultation with other stakeholders and offering both bottom-up continental and region-specific priorities.

The Summit will provide a space to ensure connection between the agenda of the global municipal and regional movement and that of the sister constituencies. A special Track has been set up to this end: The Town Hall - with discussions at the highest levels led by the organized international constituencies.

The Town Hall is the space for dialogue and interaction between different internationally organized civil society and the political leadership of the local and regional governments constituency to jointly define the local global policies. Local and regional leader cannot achieve these goals on their own, and thus they need to build upon, strengthen and enhance partnerships moving forward. The goal is not only to invite partners and stakeholders to join, but to collaborate in the world that we are building. The Town Hall is structured around 5 sessions with different themes: Accessible Cities; Addressing Informalities; Gender Equality; Right to the City, and Sustainable Urban Development.

Preparations towards the Congress were articulated around an open process of co-creation led by the constituencies themselves and facilitated by the World Secretariat. Each group elaborated policy recommendations for local governments to implement transformative action on the above-mentioned themes. At the Congress' Town Hall sessions – designed by the constituencies themselves –, each document will be presented by the constituency's representatives, discussed with UCLG members and debated with all other constituencies. After deliberations a pooling of recommendations will be defined as a result of the session, which will be presented to the World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments.



## Policy Paper on Inclusive and Accessible Cities

*“Universal Design is understood as the design of products, environments, programs and services that can be utilized by all persons, to the greatest extent, without needing adaptation or specialized design<sup>1</sup>, and for accessibility -the relevant measures to ensure to persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others to the physical environment, transportation, information and communications, including information and communication technologies and systems, and other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both urban and rural areas<sup>2</sup>. Universal Design and Accessibility allows for the realization of human rights and fundamental liberties of all persons, whichever age, persons with or without disabilities, and in general for the enjoyment of all citizens.*

*“The 2030 Agenda includes as an objective of sustainable development, to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable<sup>3</sup>. This does not mean only ramp access or special bathrooms. The challenge is greater in terms of understanding the necessities of our diverse, dynamic and interactive humanity that evolves. So, it is essential to realize that a goal not written in the Agenda, is the universal design and accessibility of cities and human settlements, comprehensively, not only in relation to the physical space and transport, but also to information, communications, technology, procedures, products and services. This also includes inclusive and accessible rebuilding after a natural disaster”*

*-Maria Soledad Cisternas Reyes, UN Special Envoy on Disability and Accessibility*

### Executive Summary

Urbanization provides opportunities for social inclusion, equitable access to services and livelihoods, and engaging and mobilizing vulnerable populations at risk of exclusion, particularly for the 25% of global population experiencing daily barriers to their meaningful participation in cities. The following policy document provides recommendations and priority actions for local and regional governments and other urban stakeholders to build cities for all by structuring policies around non-discrimination, participation, accessibility, inclusive urban policies and programs, capacity development. It includes a proposed way forward that includes multi-stakeholder partnerships, systems wide assessment and generation of disaggregated data to inform and monitor inclusive urban development.

### Background

Over the next 35 years cities will shape virtually every aspect of global development, including the manner in which fundamental human rights are won and implemented. Social exclusion, discrimination and marginalization pose significant difficulties in claiming rights, having equal access to opportunities in urban areas and building

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

<sup>2</sup> Idem

<sup>3</sup> Sustainable Development Goal 11



inclusive cities. Fostering cities and societies for human diversity, social inclusion, and equality is becoming an increasing priority and is key for a truly inclusive and sustainable future for all.

Urbanization provides opportunities for social inclusion, equitable access to services and livelihoods, and engaging and mobilizing vulnerable populations at risk of exclusion. To address these opportunities, cities are under immense pressure to ensure that urban development is inclusive and responds to the rights of all persons, particularly marginalized communities including persons with disabilities and older persons. Today, persons with disabilities and older persons make up 25% of the global population and experience numerous barriers to their effective inclusion in cities, such as lack of access to transport and public spaces, employment, and education. More than half of all persons with disabilities and older persons live in cities and towns today and by 2050, it is estimated that this number will grow to represent over 2 billion persons around the world.

Recognizing these trends in and opportunities of urban transformation, including the implications made by climate change, cities around the world must decide how to adapt their structures and services to be inclusive & accessible of all persons. *An inclusive and accessible city is a place where everyone, regardless of their economic means, gender, ethnicity, disability, age, sexual identity, migration status or religion, is enabled and empowered to fully participate in the social, economic, cultural and political opportunities that cities have to offer.* By breaking down unnecessary barriers and adopting inclusive urban development policies, investments and programs, cities can improve the social and economic outcomes for all individuals. Some initiatives that cities can adopt are: policies that promote accessibility and universal design and improve access in urban areas, more affordable housing and transportation, improved mobility, safe public spaces, and social inclusion programs that include minorities and welcome newcomers.

Many governments which have ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and cities that have adopted the [World Health Organisation \(WHO\) Age-friendly Cities framework](#) are responsible and committed to create inclusive and accessible societies. Accessibility is also recognized as a human right and a precondition for older persons and persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully and equally in society. The adoption of the [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#), the [New Urban Agenda](#) and the [Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction](#), with a clear mandate of leaving no one behind, provide a critical opportunity for cities to shape a more inclusive and accessible urban future for all.

### **Challenges to Building Cities for All**

Although cities have the possibility to access tools and expertise to support inclusive urban environments, some challenges are still present in urban planning including:



- Involvement of vulnerable groups in cities, particularly persons with disabilities and older persons in planning, designing and monitoring urban development transformations.
- Specific indicators to be used in the design of urban planning policies and strategies that can measure and monitor inclusion
- Inter-agency coordination at the local and national level on inclusion, accessibility and human rights, leading siloed strategies and implementation activities on inclusion
- Awareness and understanding by policy makers, urban planners, service providers and designers on the social, economic and innovation benefits of inclusion and accessibility for inclusive urban development, as well as the tools available to support inclusive urban development strategies.
- Common understanding of accessibility and universal design, including standards and definition.
- Knowledge and training for students and professionals on how to build accessible cities
- Inclusive and participatory budgets and financing mechanisms to implement inclusive urban development policies and strategies
- Generation of inclusive and disaggregated data to better identify vulnerable populations in society and their specific barriers to access to services available to the public in cities.
- Local government leadership and sustained commitment on inclusive urban development.
- Provisions for safe and accessible public spaces
- Initiatives to compact stigma and negative attitudes against vulnerable populations such as

### **Policy Recommendations for Inclusive Urban Development**

To operationalize the Leave No One Behind (LNOB) Principle, local and regional governments should structure their policies around inclusive human rights instruments and development frameworks including the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, [Sustainable Development Goals](#), [the New Urban Agenda](#), and the [WHO Age Friendly Cities and Communities Framework](#). In addition to these frameworks local and regional governments can tailor their objectives around six essential pillars for inclusion; namely:

1. **Non-discrimination:** calls attention to the principle to Leave No One Behind. Truly inclusive urban policy priorities mainstream equitable, affordable and safe access to physical, social and digital infrastructure across all urban planning objectives and programs to ensure the right to the city in all environments regardless of gender, age, disability and recognizes that all persons have a right to accessibility.



2. **Participation:** local governments priorities must guarantee environments in which all stakeholders can actively engage, particularly stakeholders who face attitudinal barriers limiting their participation such as persons with disabilities and older persons, in the development inclusive urban and planning policies and programs. Participatory programs must guarantee socio economic equity through inclusive programs in education, hiring practices and legal, decent and productive employment.
3. **Accessibility:** Implementation of urban & rural strategies policies should prioritize accessibility as a measurable mechanism to guarantee participation and non-discriminatory environments. Prioritizing accessibility means as a first step addressing and the eliminating of barriers in the physical, digital and social environment of cities; a second measure will be the adjustments so that all persons are able to access the tools and information needed to understand and exercise their rights in the city, including to participate in public life. This includes the provision of inclusive services and tools, to facilitate access to public facilities, spaces, information, websites and online services.
4. **Inclusive urban policies and programs:** local and regional governments should harmonize and localize international, regional and national standards on accessibility regulations and legislation including the International Standards Organizations (ISO) 71:2014 Guide on Accessibility, ISO 21542, and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0. These standards provide a strong baseline of technical guidelines. Any translation of the standards should go above baseline and be done in direct consultation with accountable institutions and civil society, particularly persons with disabilities and older persons.
5. **Capacity Building:** local and regional governments should strengthen the community's ability to engage directly in efforts to improve standards and accessibility of services facilities by promoting, developing and deploying capacity development that strengthen civil society's influence in shaping inclusive governance processes and protecting human rights in urban and territorial decision making. Part of this capacitation includes actively supporting programs and research, through collaborations with universities and non-governmental organizations, that aim to develop and improve accessible technological mechanisms for inclusive sharing and exchanging of information, knowledge, expertise, training and mobility.
6. **Data for Development:** Towards effectively informing future programs and monitoring existing ones, local and regional governments should procure and utilize evidence based and inclusive data to systemically understand and address the barriers that limit inclusion and accessibility. Inclusive data is disaggregated by sex, age, disability type, income, geographic location, and migration status along with other characteristics that are relevant to the local context. Disaggregation should take place at all dimensions of the program: when



developing baselines, during the implementation and evaluation stage. local and regional governments should promote and utilize data to inform current and future planning for the city building on a shared knowledge and best practices on areas such as universal design and age friendly cities by comparing both international and locally generated data.

### **Enabling Environments for Inclusive Urban Development**

By setting policy priorities around the pillars mentioned above, local and regional governments can develop an effective baseline of which to measure inclusion. To enable and measure inclusive urban development, local and regional governments should utilize an evaluative criteria, which assesses <sup>4</sup>:

#### **Legislative Measures for Inclusive Environments**

As priority step, local and regional governments should do an initial assessment of the current legislative measures in place at the local level to enable human rights and prioritize inclusion, universal design and accessibility for all- with a cross-sectoral and cross departmental approach to the development plans for the city. By having this legal precedence for inclusion within plans for the city, local governments ensure inclusion is institutionalized and can avoid fragmentation in the execution of projects, which are not aligned with an inclusive urban development strategy.

#### **Meaningful and Active Participation**

Participatory planning and decision making with citizens should be a central engagement in developing and enabling inclusive urban policies particularly for vulnerable communities, such as persons with disabilities and older persons. Addressing equitable participation by ensuring information is available in accessible formats, accessibility of public and private transportation, inclusive opportunities for civic, cultural, education and voluntary engagement and barrier free and enabling interior and exterior spaces, can be effective methods to ensuring all persons are able to participate in urban transformation and make productive contributions to society.

#### **Inclusive Health**

Having measures to that ensure that all people can live long and quality lives by guaranteeing mechanisms that will allow them to manage and decide on the appropriate health and social services to address their needs and rights to the city through accessible places and programs for active leisure and socialization, inclusive activities, programs and information to promote health, social and spiritual well-being, accessible and appropriate community support and health services and equal access good air and clean water.

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<sup>4</sup> Elements incorporated from: DISCO Policy Framework, WHO Age Friendly Cities & Communities Framework, World Bank Disability Inclusion & Accountability Framework, UN Disability Inclusion Strategy, Child Friendly Cities Framework



### **Security and Independence**

Safety should be a key aspect of inclusive cities to facilitate independence with urban policies and programs that address the social, financial and physical security needs of vulnerable populations, and the communities and families that support them by providing accessible and affordable housing, accessible home-safety designs and products, Accessible and hazard-free streets and buildings, safe roadways and signage for drivers and pedestrians, safe, accessible and affordable public transportation; services to assist with household chores and home maintenance, supports for caregivers, accessible stores, banks and professional service; supportive neighborhoods, safety from abuse and criminal victimization, public information and appropriate training, emergency plans and disaster recovery, appropriate and accessible employment opportunities, and flexible work practices.

### **Leadership & Inclusive Budgeting**

Local government leaders should be championing inclusion and human rights as important to their urban development goals. This commitment should also include participatory budget allocations and processes to support and finance inclusive urban planning and development. The budgetary supports in place to facilitate inclusive urban processes will affect the implementation and should be shaped by collective actions and direct consultations with all members community.

### **Capacity to Deliver Inclusive strategies and programs**

The actual administrative and coordinating capacities of the institutions to develop and implement inclusive urban development processes across sectors should be assessed. Assessment of local government capacities should look at agencies responsible for specific areas of urban life like transportation, health and housing, whether different agencies/ sectors are communicating, if there are dedicated teams or personnel inclusion to ensure accessibility in each policy areas, and existing partnerships between with other stakeholders such as organizations of older persons and persons with disabilities.

### **Attitudes and beliefs**

Inclusion should not only be reflected in policy, but also in the community's perspectives and beliefs of marginalized groups in society. In each policy area, assessing perceptions and promoting positive images of persons with disabilities and older persons can help communities better understand attitudinal barriers present in urban life. It can also be used to highlight universal design as a common good, and mechanism to guarantee all groups can equally engage shape urbanization.

These evaluative criteria can enable inclusive urban development processes and empower local governments to realize the right to the city in all environments.





### **Joint way forward**

Cities and partners operate in different contexts and are at different stages in the realization of inclusion and accessibility. In this regard, improving practices and achieving quality standards on inclusion and accessibility requires a multi-stakeholder engagement of which local and regional governments should set priority actions on:

- Adopting explicit commitment to inclusion and common understanding of universal design and accessibility, by localizing policies which reflect international legislation and frameworks championing inclusion and human rights
- Activate local communities and engage in multi-stakeholder partnerships with persons with disabilities and older persons, universities, universal design and accessibility professionals, industry and different levels of government through local advocacy and awareness campaigns to promote inclusion and universal design as a common good and core principle of development.
- Conduct a system wide assessment of municipal policies, programs, services, and personnel in place to support inclusion and accessibility across the aforementioned pillars of inclusion, in direct coordination with civil society partners, particularly organizations of persons with disabilities and older persons
- Establish a roadmap forward which addresses results of assessment and direct consultations with community, and communicate the results to the community
- Create and maintain accessible platforms to communicate planning information through websites and printed materials, which incorporate accessible and user-friendly formats (eg: easy read)
- Establish mechanisms to actively and continuously engage the community, particularly persons with disabilities and older persons, in planning and monitoring of urban transformation through municipal working groups urban and rural community outreach, and urban webinars
- Regularly generate local disaggregated data on inclusion by auditing accessibility in cities and sharing information with the community
- Progressively share progress on inclusion with the global community

To support and accelerate the way forward, the principles and mechanism of the [Global Compact on Inclusive and Accessible Cities](#) provide a framework for local and regional governments to begin developing and aligning their urban strategies towards inclusion and includes:

1. Signing and committing to [Global Compact on Inclusive and Accessible Cities](#), in which the city would designate a focal point and agency to coordinate and communicate efforts. Cities are then invited to join in the Global Community of Practice on Inclusive and Accessible Cities. The Community of Practice is a space where cities can have a dialogue with other local governments leaders and urban actors to exchange knowledge and good practices on inclusive urban development, and create partnerships to accelerate their local implementation, development, evaluation on inclusion and sustainability. Local and regional



governments are also invited to share their local practices on inclusive urban development by utilizing and submitting the template form, which will be shared on the Cities4all webpage and among the Compact's network.

2. Utilizing the Compact's global survey to analyze their current state of inclusion and identify gaps to be addressed in implementation efforts to build the Cities for All. During this assessment phase, local and regional governments should engage local civil society organizations- particularly organizations of persons with disabilities and older persons, along with the technical teams within the municipality to incorporate their perspectives in the analyses and developing capacities. Local and regional governments should also disseminate the principles of the Compact locally in the community through awareness raising activities, events and consultations.
3. Benchmarking and monitoring progress, by engaging in regular reporting of their efforts to mainstream and implement the Compact, along with other human rights instruments (eg: the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) locally , and to global community, The proposed mechanism for reporting is through the Global Summit on Inclusive and Accessible Cities, assessment through a proposed Global Inclusion Index, and sharing of efforts at the global level through the reporting structure of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the High Level Political Forum and the World Urban Forum.

In practice the six principles of the Compact- non-discrimination, participation, accessibility, inclusive urban policies and programs, capacity building, and data for development can lead to tangible shifts in social equity and resilience in cities, to create universally inclusive and accessible environments that leave no one behind.

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