



**Jacqueline Moustache-Belle, Mayor of Victoria, Seychelles, Co President of UCLG**

**World Humanitarian Summit  
(Venue, date and time TBC)**

**UCLG position:**

- **Local Governments are Agents of Development:** Approximately half the world's population currently lives in urban areas and it is estimated that this will grow. This growth will occur in cities, resulting in severe social and economic inequities and escalating rates of poverty. This extraordinary rate of urban growth is transpiring alongside widespread rural exodus and migration flows due to conflicts, climate change or economic and political crises, placing an enormous burden upon both rural and urban local governments, as they struggle to put in place responses to deal with the effects of these unprecedented demographic shifts. In this context, **local and regional authorities become both key development actors and the target of development cooperation.**
- As **politically legitimate and accountable community leaders**, local governments play a valuable convening role that **brings together development stakeholders** (civil society, community groups, and policy makers) to help shape and implement development policies and programs. Given their responsibility to ensure equitable delivery of essential services, including in many cases social services around health, welfare, and housing, combined with their ability to replicate successes for community-wide benefit, **local governments occupy an important niche and must be recognized as valued partners by the development community.**
- Avoiding a top-down approach to the delivery of international aid and boosting aid directly channelled to local governments are both UCLG objectives.
- In order to make aid more effective, **all stakeholders, including local governments, should be consulted and taken into account.** Key development stakeholders (i.e. civil society and local governments) should be part of the policy discussions
- True ownership of national development strategies can only be effective if **all stakeholders are being consulted on the needs and constraints**; and in order to ensure this ownership, **the capacity of all stakeholders has to be developed.**
- Donors should focus on the development impact generated by aid rather on the mechanics of aid delivery.
- Only a very small percentage of Official Development Assistance is dedicated to local governments and even less is managed by local governments directly. A higher allocation of funds by donors and central governments for creating stronger local governments and local government associations is crucial to ensure real change.
- Local governments, through decentralized cooperation, are playing an important role in the delivery of aid through peer-to-peer cooperation. Local governments and their associations mobilize community assets and significant resources that complement the financial contributions from donors. The delivery of these resources through programs and projects that are co-managed by southern and northern partners promote mutual accountability and enhance local capacity to plan, manage, implement and report on results.

**What can be done:**

- Attach a fundamental importance to decentralization as an important building block for good governance and effective development assistance at the local level.
- The importance of democracy, improvement of governance, social progress and environmental challenges as prime engines of development.

- The need to support capacity building initiatives of local authorities and emphasizes the importance of local resources in the provision of technical cooperation.
- Formally recognize local governments as development actors in future development compacts and promote their participation in a systematic way in all stages of the development process.
- Given its relevance as an indicator of a country's development performance, governance should be a cross-cutting theme for central governments and donors in the same manner as gender equality, human rights and environmental sustainability so that it receives greater consideration during policy and program development.
- Adopt a more integrated approach to strengthening local governance that combines working locally, nationally, regionally and globally. This approach will facilitate the scaling-up of successful practices and enable local community leaders to engage in dialogue at the national level to positively influence public policies that will lead to transformative change and sustainable development at the local level.
- Put in place formal consultation mechanisms to strengthen coordination between local and national governments and donors, particularly with respect to policy formulation, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of national development strategies
- Offer a balance of aid delivery mechanisms (e.g. projects, program based approaches, budget support and technical assistance) to support governance and decentralization that will ensure that local authorities have the mechanisms to respond with sufficient flexibility in different contexts. Aid channelled through budgetary support and sector-wide approaches (SWAs) must be designed in a manner that recognizes and reinforces the legitimate role of local authorities as credible public institutions and agents of development.
- In the context of decentralized cooperation, put in place mechanisms that allow local governments and/or local government associations to directly manage international cooperation programs that focus on: strengthening the capacity of the local government sector; promoting democracy at the local level, and; supporting decentralization
- Strengthen the capacity and strategic partnering role of local governments to engage in multi-stakeholder dialogue on national development strategies and in policy discussions United Nations.
- Strengthen the resources accessible to local authorities. It is proposed that 20 per cent of international aid (currently provided in the form of budgetary support and sector wide approaches) be earmarked to support decentralization processes and the capacity building of local government
- Engage in a dialogue with donors, and central governments to ensure that the needs and concerns of local governments are clearly understood and supported by relevant policies and programs.
- Ensure that the voices of the full diversity of the community are heard by promoting participatory processes further applying this principle to decentralized co-operation which should be based on strong demand from the beneficiary.
- Ensure that decentralized cooperation approaches, such as municipal international cooperation (MIC) and association capacity building (ACB), are well coordinated and developed within the framework of southern-driven agendas that take into account the local cultural context, country processes and governance reform programs, concretized in country strategies for municipal sector development.
- Develop a community of practice that will facilitate the sharing of knowledge, tools and lessons learned.
- Promote long-term partnerships between local governments and partner countries, international organizations, bilateral and multilateral donors, in addition to other key stakeholders such as parliamentarians and civil society.