



LLEIDA INTERNATIONAL FORUM
ON INTERMEDIARY CITIES

The Power of I-Cities



UCLG

United Cities Local
and Regional Governments



Empowering I-cities

The urbanization process is not happening in big cities only, but also and even more rapidly in intermediary ones. According to the United Nations, today cities with fewer than a million inhabitants constitute more than 60% of the world's urban population and they are growing faster than larger urban centres. Moreover, cities are increasingly becoming the primary drivers for trade, investment and economic governance. As a result, a new order or system of cities, which is not based on physical size, is emerging. This new system, based on economic performance and city to city cooperation is creating different dynamics in the urban world.

Cities traditionally referred to as medium-sized, secondary or middle and small are becoming the subject of renewed interest by scholars and international development organizations. Due to the unique relation they foster between rural and urban areas and among themselves, they are increasingly recognized as intermediary. This means they play an active mediating role between their surrounding territories, often agricultural, and the major urban hubs and markets. By offering basic services to the urban and rural population and by providing links to broader networks of flows, they can stimulate sustainable urban growth and provide opportunities for their regions. Therefore they are increasingly considered key elements for more balanced urbanization processes.

We believe that the international community should provide greater visibility and support for intermediary cities due to their important role and global size. The needs and challenges faced by their local governments should be of key importance for international associations. UN-Habitat and UCLG have been supporting the development of capacity of many cities over time, through national and regional frameworks and the exchange of applicable experience. We believe today in the need for a renewed focus in supporting intermediary cities to identify their own development path and ways of managing urban growth, through adequate strategic and physical planning frameworks and governance mechanisms, as a key priority in order to achieve a more just and sustainable urban development.

The Lleida Forum on intermediary cities this last June 2013 was an occasion to discuss these ideas with mayors and academics engaged in advocacy and research on intermediary cities through the Ciudades Intermedias (CIMES) network, which has gathered experience in this area for the past 10 years. The event, one of a few on the road to empowering i-cities, proved the eagerness of local governments to be more active and to exchange and to innovate on urban governance and planning. We hope that was the beginning of an extended cooperation, which will stimulate more balanced and just development of cities and territories into the future.

JOSEP ROIG | SECRETARY GENERAL, UNITED CITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

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Why UCLG is Focusing on Intermediary Cities

I-CITIES, A KEY FOR THE REGIONAL BALANCE

Intermediary cities - I-cities- are important not only because of their increasing weight in the urban world but, above all, because of the functions they fulfil. They compensate the excessive growth of larger cities while creating an intermediary space for relations with rural areas. I-cities avoid the existence of a national or regional territory polarised between large cities and a countryside with small villages.

They are a complement to the big city, not a competitor, and allow a country's urban network to become more polycentric. Consequently, the flow of goods, capitals and people can benefit a greater part of the territory and its inhabitants. For instance, small and medium-sized cities make it possible for the rural population to have access to services such as healthcare, education, and stores, among many others.

The definition of I-cities may vary depending on the geographic context. For example, it is clear that an intermediary city in India is not the same in scale and function as an intermediary city in Germany. The concept is still open to debate, but this does not prevent the identification of these cities as a diverse group with a common profile, since they share many features and problems and need to develop their potential which is very high when we consider their hinterland.

Metropolitan cities -particularly those in developing countries- have been gaining more attention from international research. Nevertheless, intermediary cities are an equally important reference in fully understanding the urban phenomenon, on both regional and local levels, in all its diversity and complexity.

UCLG 'S COMMITMENT: EMPOWERING I-CITIES

UCLG represents and defends the interests of local and regional governments and their associations on the world stage. In 2013 the UCLG committee on Urban Strategic Planning was tasked to focus on intermediary cities. If they want to be active in the political sphere, they have to share experiences, disseminate information and knowledge, and learn from each other. Many I-cities ask their associations to promote their demands for learning opportunities. Platforms of associations such as UCLG can help them to adopt better planning instruments and promote inter-municipal cooperation at all levels.

I-Cities have great potential for improving the lives of millions of people, working on management and planning innovation closer to the citizens' needs. I-Cities are powerful, but this power has been underestimated or unexplored to date. The aim of the process conducted by UCLG and its partners at the United Nations, particularly UN Habitat and the International Labour Organization, the CIMES (intermediate cities network) and other networks, is to fully develop this potential.

THE LLEIDA FORUM, A STAGE TOWARD RABAT

The International Forum held on the 28th and 29th of June in the city of Lleida, located in western Catalonia (Spain), was an opportunity not only to identify issues and specific areas of interest and to share knowledge and experiences, but also to encourage a dialogue between leaders,





Why UCLG is Focusing on Intermediary Cities

SMALL AND INTERMEDIARY CITIES ARE A COMPLEMENT TO THE BIG CITY, NOT A COMPETITOR, AND ALLOW A COUNTRY'S URBAN NETWORK TO BECOME MORE POLYCENTRIC

partners and researchers from Africa, Europe and Latin America. The city of Lleida was not a mere backdrop for the Forum, but an actor showing to all participants, through organized tours, the challenges that an intermediary city has to face in the specific southern European context. The Lleida meeting was the second major step in the learning and sharing process that began in the South African city of KwaDukuza and will conclude in Rabat with the UCLG World Congress of Local and Regional leaders in October 2013. Lleida received around fifty participants -mayors, municipal technicians, researchers and members of international organizations- who shared their views and debated the best way to improve management and strategic planning. This effort also resulted in contributions to the Framework Document on Intermediary Cities that emerged from the KwaDukuza meeting and the collaboration between UCLG, the UNESCO

Chair, and the UIA-CIMES network. The final document, with these contributions, will be debated in Rabat.

The participants were able to see firsthand the path followed by Lleida to consolidate its role as an I-city in the context of Catalonia, where most of the population and activity is concentrated on the coast and, especially, in the Barcelona metropolitan area. Aware of this territorial imbalance, Lleida's leaders have devised and implemented a real strategy to consolidate the city as a regional urban centre.

LLEIDA, A CITY WITH A STRATEGY BASED ON LOCAL STRENGTHS

Lleida lies in one of the most fertile and productive plains of Europe. Its economy is based mainly in the food industry, especially the fruit sector, and related services. This is a typical feature of mid-sized cities where often the economy is not sufficiently diversified. However, Lleida has managed to turn this apparent weakness into a true strength. It has done so by adding value to agriculture through entrepreneurship and knowledge-related activities. A good example of entrepreneurial venture is shown by the Actel group, driven by a private initiative and bringing together more than 120 cooperatives. Thanks to commercialisation, logistics and innovation, more than 11,500 families can live off the land. Profitable farming improves households' purchasing power and thus benefits the local economy, including the city of Lleida as the centre of the area. In the field of knowledge, the Food Science and Technology Park of Lleida hosts technology and research companies. It aims to provide high value-added services in the areas of ICT and food and health. The Park has been promoted by the City Council and the University of Lleida and located in former military barracks. In addition, the municipality is fostering small scale peri-urban agriculture. Lleida is surrounded by a 120 km² of agricultural land

whose history dates back to the Middle Ages. This activity continues today, although facing certain problems. There is an ongoing process of abandonment of land that could, eventually, jeopardize local agriculture activity, which today extends from the surrounding countryside to the outskirts of the city. Esther Fanlo, head-coordinator of Environment in the City Council, has synthesized municipal action aimed at preserving this activity in three major axes: "improve the productivity of the plots, stimulate marketing channels in the city, and sensitize citizens about the great interest of these agricultural areas, so that they can be perceived as an extension of the city itself."

The rural-urban symbiosis has been complemented by a mobility policy aimed at making travel between the city and its immediate territory easier, with an integrated fare system and a single contactless card valid for all trips. Thus, Lleida and 149 neighbouring municipalities have become a "connected" network from a transport point of view.

Finally, the city strategy in recent years has also included the strengthening of Lleida's role as a regional pole with different facilities and infrastructures: auditorium, conference hall, museums, university and airport. In connection with this strategy it is worth noting the recovery of historical and cultural heritage (the old cathedral that identifies the city skyline is a paradigm) or ecological heritage (Segre River Park and La Mitjana area). The city is currently working on an Urban Development Plan that will ensure an orderly growth over the next 15 years. This set of consistent policies has slowed down but not completely stopped during the severe economic crisis, and has allowed Lleida to become more resilient than other cities and regions in this context. National unemployment exceeds 27%, whereas in the city of Lleida the figure is between 16% and 17%. The case of Lleida proves that, despite all the constraints, intermediary cities can influence their own destiny with the right policies and strategies.

INTERVIEW

Àngel Ros Mayor of Lleida



How does the Mayor's Office work to improve the productive relationship between the city's rural and urban areas?

Lleida's Horta (market garden) is the authentic lung of the city and also supplies it with quality, local food products. Lleida City Council actively seeks to maintain and strengthen its ties with the Horta and, with this in mind, has recently created nurseries to help young entrepreneurs take their first steps in the world of agriculture. Furthermore, social and family allotments have been created in the part of the Horta known as Rufeà because the city council firmly believes in the power and potential of agro-industry. This is clearly evident at Lleida's Agri-Food Science and Technology Park, whose services include: the Maqcentre for innovation in the agricultural machinery and industrial equipment sectors; the Cereal and Bread Technology Centre; the Catalan Institute of Wood; and the IRTA Fruitcentre. This direct link between innovation and production has a long history in Lleida and, given Mercolleida's position as an internationally renowned market for agricultural and livestock products, this also enables Lleida to influence the European agri-food sector. The Fira de Lleida is another key element in the productive relationship between rural and urban areas. It organises

24 different fairs and exhibitions every year, with the Sant Miquel Agricultural Machinery Exhibition and Eurofruit being its most representative events.

To what extent does the city of Lleida benefit from having its own market gardening area and how important is this for the city's economy?

The arrival of the high-speed train has transformed Lleida but the city has not forgotten the proximity of the Horta: its natural green belt. The Horta continues to provide the city with quality local food produce and Lleida City Council seeks to conserve its agricultural function and actively promotes the consumption of locally grown fruit and vegetables. Every month, the city centre hosts a Sunday market selling km 0 products. This initiative has also led to the study, in conjunction with the University of Lleida, of traditional varieties associated with the Horta of Lleida. Lleida City Council also works with local schools to promote a greater knowledge and understanding of the local landscape, including this market gardening area and its products. Furthermore, the Horta is an important tourist attraction for enogastronomy. Without a doubt, food production is an important source of wealth for Lleida and the whole of its territory.



I-Cities at a Glance

- There is no strict definition of the range of population of an intermediary city, it can range from 50,000 to one million people, according to the source.
- More than half of the urban population - 63% - were living in cities of less than 1 million inhabitants in 2010, according to United Nations
- The local administration budget per capita is significantly lower in intermediary cities than in larger cities
- Studies indicate that cities up to 650,000 inhabitants are more compact than those that exceed this population: 70% of the inhabitants live in a circle of 3.9 km radius.



Local Leaders and Researchers Share Their Views

The first event of the Forum was a roundtable discussion moderated by the UCLG Secretary General, Josep Roig, who encouraged local leaders to exchange their views on how to deal with problems, find solutions, and set strategies. The participants willingly accepted the suggestion. Mayors came from: KwaDukuza (South Africa), Butuan (Philippines), San Vicente (Ecuador), Narayanganj (Bangladesh), Agadir (Morocco), Nampula (Mozambique), Chefchaouen (Morocco) and Ferrara (Italy).

The roundtable served to display similarities and differences in the needs and management strategies of intermediary cities. During the debate, five major thematic areas emerged, priorities that may vary significantly depending on the local context: tangible and intangible assets, which are the base for wealth; the role of imagination and innovation in benefiting from those assets; socio-economic and political initiatives, conditioned upon funding and political organization; and finally, the need to develop stable formulas of cooperation between all intermediary cities to achieve greater recognition. The roundtable confirmed that, although there is still work to be done, all cities are undertaking initiatives in similar directions.

DIFFERENT PRIORITIES: NORTH AND SOUTH

The classical distinction between North and South arose as the discussion evolved. In the North the virulence of the current economic crisis has altered the priority agenda in some countries, such as Italy. In the South there are contrasted situations with different welfare

levels and service standards, according to the country.

In Ecuador, for example, the central government is strongly committed to improve basic infrastructure in local communities. The mayor of San Vicente, Humberto Antonio Garcia, noted that “we had important needs in the sewage system and drinking water distribution and this is what we have done first in our Canton: to obtain the political compromise from the government to make a large investment in basic services. There is still a lot to be done in rural areas around town, especially concerning the poor state of roads, which the mayor referred to as “an obstacle to development”.

Agadir also has some areas without basic services like sanitation, as highlighted by its mayor, Tariq Kabbage. In Bangladesh, the fight against poverty has a larger dimension. The continuous growth of slums as a result of migration from rural areas was quoted as a “challenging reality” by the mayor of Narayanganj, Salina Hayat. In Nampula, Mozambique, the city has also a set of outstanding priorities: “The incidence of poverty is 63%, water does not reach everywhere and illiteracy is still a problem.” explained the mayor, Arlindo Sanfins Castro.

In the city of Ferrara, Italy, basic services are not an issue, but the City Council has seen its funding reduced significantly in the last years. Thus, cultural activity, vital to the local economy and traditionally supported by public resources, is seriously affected. “Now we have to find other ways to keep cultural activity going on” said its representative councillor, Roberta Fusari.

Local Leaders and Researchers Share Their Views



IN THE CITY OF FERRARA, ITALY, BASIC SERVICES ARE NOT AN ISSUE, BUT THE CITY COUNCIL HAS SEEN ITS FUNDING REDUCED SIGNIFICANTLY IN THE LAST YEARS

MAYOR OF CHEFCHAOUEN HAS PROMOTED PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY PROGRAMS "BECAUSE ACTIVE CIVIL SOCIETY MUST BE A PILLAR OF DEVELOPMENT"

ASSETS FOR DEVELOPMENT: GEOGRAPHY, HISTORY AND CULTURE

While priorities can be very different depending on the degree of economic development, all cities have one or more assets in common and the potential to generate wealth. These assets can be found in advantageous geographical locations, in the presence of historical, cultural or natural heritage, or in a singular identity. The first step in taking advantage of these possibilities is to be aware of their existence. In this sense, in the Lleida Forum, municipalities proved that they know and value their assets, although not all cities have benefited enough from them. Assets and urban strategy go hand in hand. The location of Butuan City (Philippines) in an area of hardwood forests and next to the Agusan, the widest and most navigable river on the island of Mindanao, is both a risk and an advantage. According to its mayor, Ferdinand Amante Magdamo, the river, which causes frequent floods, is also seen as a great hope for future development: "These geographical conditions, however challenging, will help us become a great wood corridor, reinforcing our traditional role as a commercial city", he pointed out. Similarly, Narayanganj, located beside the Shitalakshya River, sees its port, one of the oldest in Bangladesh, as a positive asset to foster development. For its part, Chefchaouen, in northern Morocco, has used his position, surrounded by natural parks in the Rif Mountains, to highlight an environmental heritage. This gives full meaning to the concept of "ecological city", promoted by the municipality that adds up to Chefchaouen long history (it was founded in 1471) as its mayor, Mohamed Sefiani, underlined. Geographical position also matters to San Vicente which sees biodiversity and its beautiful settings with vast beaches as major assets for the future. Ferrara also combines culture and

nature. It is a fully planned Renaissance city with a large historic centre which has been a World Heritage Site since the 1990s. This international recognition has been extended to the adjacent region of the Po River Delta. The African cities of KwaDukuza and Nampula are trying to integrate social diversity to carry out a city project. The policy of the former has a special value in the context of the new South Africa that emerged after apartheid. In the Mozambican case, a smooth coexistence model is the great asset "with a population that is half Muslim and half Christian living in harmony" as its mayor explained. One difference between the two cities is that KwaDukuza has a pre-colonial long cultural past with the Zulu nation as a highlight, while Nampula was born from a military Portuguese outpost in the 20th century. Despite this, Nampula is making history nowadays, as it is becoming a reference city for different provinces of the country due to its increasing economic activity and its attraction as academic center in the North of Mozambique.

THE LIMIT IS IMAGINATION: FROM ASSETS TO STRATEGIES

The debate between mayors and city representatives highlighted some experiences that showed how it was possible to transform assets into working strategies. In Chefchaouen the label "ecological city" is being used to promote projects for water and waste treatment, and renewable energy implementation. The five centuries of history of the city are an appealing feature for an external projection that combines culture with the environment. Butuan City wants to restore the Agusan River so that "an element of threat could be transformed into a positive element" according to its Mayor. Imagination is also expressed in social innovation. In Nampula, civic associations channel the



community's dialogue with the administration. Now, the City Council also wants these associations to become progressively active centres for creating jobs. The city of Ferrara is faced with the challenge of transforming culture and heritage into a business opportunity to generate new companies and jobs. The ethno-cultural diversity of KwaDukuza is a basis to enhance the attractiveness of the city as part of a country where until recently diversity was fought. Agadir has been carrying out, over the last decade, a policy that, according to the mayor, "never separates urban achievements from social interventions in education, culture and welfare". Throughout the discussion it became clear that the most successful initiatives are those that bind previously unconnected realities -like environment and history- or those that bring a new perspective on existing realities, creating new uses and new functions.

FINANCE, GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT MODELS

The debate also showed that, aside from imagination, the chances of developing good initiatives depend on funding, good governance and a clear development model. The limitation of financial resources is fairly common to all I-cities and it has to do with the capacity of generating income and with the relationship between municipalities and other levels of government, especially the central government. In some cities, such as San Vicente, financial support from the central government has adopted specific formulas of collaboration, "Together" "Together with the municipalities, the state bank has designed a special economic contribution from citizens, so that when improvements are carried out in a specific neighbourhood, citizens can value what has been done", explained the mayor Humberto Antonio



García. Given the scarcity of public resources, Butuan City has chosen to develop public-private partnerships to maintain the pace of investments that the municipality requires. In Morocco, a traditionally centralist country, the new constitution adopted in 2011 as a step in the democratization process, includes certain degree of decentralization. The mayor of Agadir called for "more local power to do what we see as crucial in our city." In Chefchaouen, the mayor has promoted participatory democracy programmes "because the opinion of civil society must be a pillar of development", while stating that "there is still a lot of investment in the city that is conditioned by the decision of the ministries in Rabat". In general, all mayors agreed on claiming more power, not only for the local administration but to share it with their people. The mayor of San Vicente spoke of "citizen empowerment" and emphasized that "participation is required to correct distortions". Nampula has gone a step further by developing a consultative citizen's forum which helps to handle municipal economic decisions on city projects. Governance emerged as another key concept that must include greater autonomy and resource availability, but also the fight against bad practices like corruption. This was emphasized by the mayor of Agadir. Corruption can come in different ways and one of them is land management. Land consumption is related to the growth capacity of the municipality and also with its development model, another essential issue. The mayor of Nampula, a city with high expectations in land development, said that "the problem is not growth, but the way in which it is managed." On this point the mayor of Agadir

DURING THE FORUM MUNICIPALITIES PROVED THAT THEY KNOW AND VALUE THEIR ASSETS, ALTHOUGH POTENTIALS HAVE STILL TO BE FULLY EXPLORED

THERE WAS UNANIMITY ON THE NEED TO JOIN EFFORTS AMONG INTERMEDIARY CITIES REGARDLESS OF THE COUNTRY THEY ARE IN

Local Leaders and Researchers Share Their Views



I-Cities main challenges

- Poor and insufficient planning.
- Higher cost of services provision with less income from taxes.
- Lack of financial resources.
- Economy depending on few sectors.
- Political and financial dependence with limited administrative capacity.
- Unstable political and conflict-ridden political structures.
- Impact of climate change.
- Need for improving management of urban growth and development.
- Insufficient promotion and city marketing.
- Need for more research on I-Cities.

JOSEP MARIA LLOP, FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF LLEIDA, SAID THAT “THE FOCUS MUST BE ON INSTRUMENTS”, AND ALSO THAT “CONCEPTUAL DEBATES ON WHAT AN INTERMEDIATE CITY IS MUST COOL DOWN”

was very precise: “We need spaces designed to accommodate urban facilities, we cannot consume all the land for rapid development; we must make a plan to anticipate future needs and develop the land carefully as these needs become more concrete”.

MAKING HISTORY TOGETHER

One of the aspects that were unanimously raised during the Lleida Forum, and particularly during the local leaders’ roundtable, was the need to join efforts among intermediary cities regardless of the country. Narayananj City Corporation and Butuan City expressed their wishes to continue working with international organizations and through city cooperation. The mayor of Chechaouen advocated for “a network of intermediary cities within UCLG to share good practices and exercise lobbying, allowing us to cooperate internationally.” According to the mayor “this would be a way to draw the attention of institutions that now devote their full attention to larger cities.”

The councillor of Ferrara supported this proposal and stated that “an intermediary cities alliance would have a great importance to give us a voice in the world.” This alliance “must be strong” said the KwaDukuza representative, Sikhumbuzo Hlongwane, because “it would help to address properly the lack of funding problem”, he emphasized. The mayor of San Vicente claimed to continue this process with the strong slogan “together we will make history.”

KNOWLEDGE FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING

The mayors’ interventions showed the vision of political leadership and the everyday challenges of intermediary cities. The leadership perspective is based on the commitment for transformation but as Jacqueline Marion Subban, repre-

sentative of the eThekweni/Durban Municipality and Municipal Institute of Learning MILE, highlighted, “only a growing body of knowledge can support long term planning and action”. The Institute works to create basic documentation because sometimes it is difficult for cities to have tools and methods at their disposal and information for strategic planning. According to Jacqueline Marion Subban, there are two elements that facilitate this type of planning: innovation and governance. Josep Maria Llop, director of the UNESCO Chair in Intermediary Cities at the University of Lleida, emphasized the importance of translating knowledge into policies and instruments that should be used in managing urban development. In this sense, he showed a synthesis methodology (the base plan) that integrates in one single document a diagnosis of a city potential with a strategic vision involving key projects for the next few years.

The main idea is to make this tool available to UN Habitat and present it at the Union of Architects World Congress in Durban in August 2014. Josep Maria Llop, a recognised researcher on intermediary cities, believes that “the focus must be on instruments” and said that “conceptual debates on the definition of intermediary city must cool down.” According to Llop, the plurality of intermediary cities is so high that it forces people to think in a variety of concepts or definitions, so that everyone feels comfortable with them”. The expert from the University of Lleida emphasized that “the challenge is to learn from diversity and transform it in instruments and policies that can be applied in each specific place”.

Cities Alliance (CA), a global partnership for urban poverty reduction that promotes and strengthens the role of cities in sustainable development, is also supporting the empowerment of I-Cities. The CA representative, Dr. Rene Peter

Hohmann, presented some snapshots from a forthcoming study on The Systems of Secondary Cities that has been commissioned by the CA. This study pinpoints some important findings: there is a lack of knowledge and evidence on people’s livelihoods and investment needs in secondary cities, and the fact that secondary cities will have the highest population growth in the next 20 years.

One conclusion of the study is that a development paradigm shift is needed to acknowledge the greater role of secondary cities for national economic growth and as key drivers for rural development. Secondly, the study indicates that local capacities need to be strengthened to bridge the gap between metropolitan areas and secondary cities and to address the challenges of underinvestment. Finally, governments and international development partners can have clear roles in supporting the economic development of secondary cities.

FROM EGYPT TO HOLLAND: THE IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGE

The theoretical discussion was complemented by two examples of strategic planning in two very different contexts: North Africa and Western Europe. Tsveta Velinova, responsible for Spatial Planning in the region of The Hague, The Netherlands, and Sahar Attia, Professor of Architecture and Urban Design and Planning at the University of Cairo, presented their experiences. Tsveta Velinova stressed the importance of joint work between different levels of government. “Inter-municipal cooperation is part of the strategy for steady urban/peri-urban partnerships”. Velinova also referred to the concept of integrated planning as an important way to achieve an urban/peri-urban balanced development. She highlighted the role of regional governments, “which are crucial in determining the spatial

structures”. In The Hague region, there is a strategic space agenda conducting transversal work with sustainability criteria in the following areas: housing, commerce, transport, ecology, economy and workplaces.

Strategic planning began in Egypt in 2007 and 44 cities, from a total number of 230, have approved their plans. However, according to Sahar Attia, “national budgeting is not aligned with real needs and people’s aspirations, and it puts obstacles to implementation”. She also emphasized that “on many occasions tools available are not matching with the level of awareness, the decision making process, and the planning laws”.

Regarding these kinds of difficulties, Jacqueline Marion Subban, from the eThekweni Municipality and the MILE, recalled that “there is almost no research on what happens in the implementation phase of the strategic plans”. She also stressed that stakeholders are central to the delivery of the plan. Josep Maria Llop added that in order to mobilize stakeholders “it is very important that the strategic plan is understandable,” and that “a plan is not just a technical document, but the soul of local politics.” According to the professor, the right to the city equals the right to the plan. This is particularly important in the case of intermediary cities where, due to their scale, it becomes feasible.

JACQUELINE MARION SUBBAN, FROM THE DURBAN MUNICIPAL INSTITUTE OF LEARNING (MILE), RECALLED THAT “THERE IS ALMOST NO RESEARCH ON WHAT HAPPENS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION PHASE OF THE STRATEGIC PLANS IN INTERMEDIARY CITIES”

THE MOST ORIGINAL INITIATIVES ARE THOSE THAT BIND PREVIOUSLY UNCONNECTED REALITIES -LIKE ENVIRONMENT AND HISTORY- OR THOSE THAT BRING A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON EXISTING REALITIES



Roundtables: Improving the Frame Document

The Lleida Forum, as a stage in a process, had the task of enriching the Intermediary Cities framework document with recommendations and contributions to be discussed in the next World Summit of Local and Regional leaders, the 4th UCLG Congress from 1st to 4th October 2013 in Rabat (Morocco). Its purpose is to develop a document that summarizes the local governments' position on urban strategic planning and policy improvement for I-cities.

For this purpose, the Forum participants met in working groups devoted to four major areas: 1) intergovernmental relations, institutional and financial aspects; 2) local, social and economic development; 3) spatial planning and environment and 4) social dialogue and culture identity. From simultaneous discussions on these roundtables, a set of priorities and new proposals for each area emerged and were included in the frame document.

GOVERNMENT AND FUNDING

- The main priority identified was intergovernmental coordination. Different administration

levels are involved in planning and implementation processes. This is particularly relevant as decentralization frameworks often do not detail strategic alignment for example in citizens' participation, negotiation with private investment or local economic development opportunities. A systemic vision should be adopted.

- The creation of partnerships between municipalities, but also between municipalities and private agents, would improve the local administrations capacities.
- As I-cities grow, the financing of urban development is important. Local governments need to identify funding opportunities. One way to access these opportunities is through international cooperation. However, national government funds must not be forgotten, as illustrated by San Vicente in Ecuador. Furthermore, the option of financing urban development through land management instruments and urbanization policies can be adapted to different scales.
- Right to the plan: including urban planning in strategic processes is essential; in particular, participation of communities and stakeholders can be more effective if the basic understanding

Roundtables: Improving the Frame Document



LOCAL GOVERNMENTS NEED TO IDENTIFY FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES. ONE WAY TO ACCESS THESE OPPORTUNITIES IS THROUGH INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

of urban planning is ensured.

- Transparency in government action is very relevant in order to guarantee effectiveness.
- Public spending managed by cities should never be less than 10% of the whole country's public spending and investment in public assets and land.

LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In order to respond to the dynamics of local economic development, it is necessary to build complementary and supportive networks which are not moved by competition. South-South and Triangular Cooperation can support this work, also on a regional level between intermediary cities and rural communities.

Local economic development (LED) of intermediary cities should be adapted to the reality of the territory and the local economy. The economic diversity of the cities shapes both its potentialities and challenges for development, but local economies in cities are usually driven by one or a few specific sectors. LED must be supervised by an effective planning. This implies:

- Knowing the territory and the economic actors.
- Identifying the elements that make an inter-

mediary city more dynamic and balanced: each city must have an identity.

- Having short, medium and long term visions, both locally and regionally, in order to strengthen ties between the city and nearby rural communities.
- Supporting the creation of decent jobs.
- Encouraging the creation of small and medium sustainable enterprises and cooperatives, and also supporting small and medium companies, attracting investment.
- Adequately considering the potential of the informal sector and the needs of the informal sector economy.
- Offering quality services to all citizens: in particular housing and public transportation.
- Encouraging innovation and development of green economy (important role of universities), particularly finding a balance between rural and urban economies.

SPATIAL PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT

These were the main highlights for this area of discussion:

- Spatial and strategic plans have to be linked, or even better, integrated in a single plan. Urban spatial and strategic planning are also tools for economic development.

SPATIAL AND STRATEGIC PLANS HAVE TO BE LINKED, OR EVEN BETTER, INTEGRATED IN A SINGLE PLAN



IT IS NECESSARY TO BUILD COMPLEMENTARY AND SUPPORTIVE NETWORKS, NOT MOVED BY COMPETITION, TO FOSTER LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- A development plan needs to be strategic and spatial (identifying priorities and where they are located).
- Planners should work on different scales not thinking only in one city but on a wider system of cities.
- The assets that can change the development dynamics must be valued (included land and natural assets). Natural assets must be preserved on the long term for different uses: it is important to make informed decisions. Law and regulations need to support this vision at national level.
- The right mechanisms must be created to protect public space.
- A plan must be simple, clear and short, so it can respond to rapid change. A basic plan is a very good example.
- It is very important to have precise city indicators for the research agenda.
- UN guidelines on urban planning have to be taken into account.

SOCIAL DIALOGUE AND CULTURAL IDENTITY

- Social protection plays a key role in this area. If cities offer health and education systems and other social services of good quality, it can be assured that these public services will positively and directly impact the local youth and elderly,

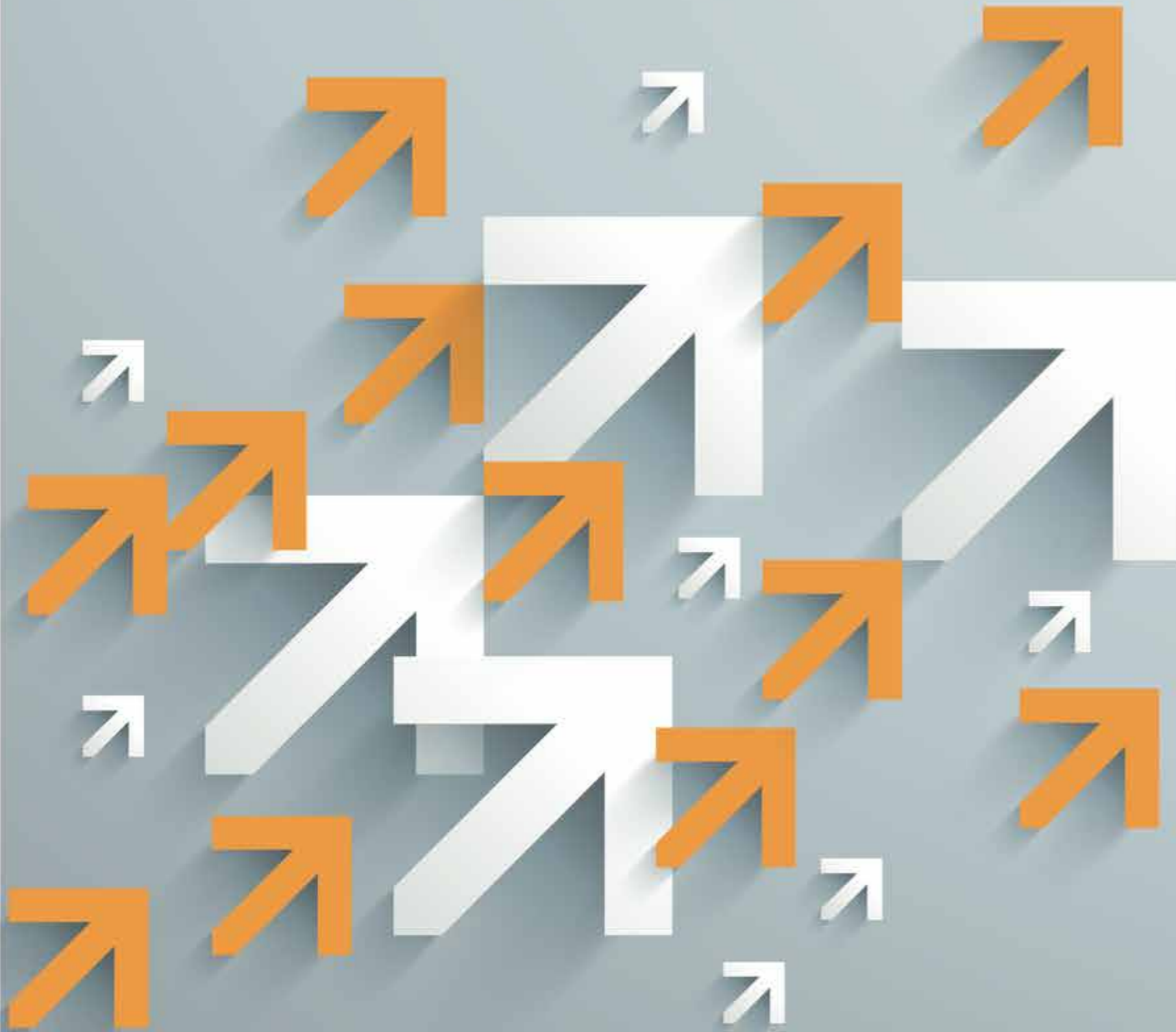


thus contributing to fighting social exclusion while expanding social protection.

- Rural areas deserve more support and better attention from national governments. This support must be oriented to diversify economic development strategies and to encourage young people to stay in those areas and work on new business possibilities other than agriculture (tourism, agribusiness, crafts). For this purpose it is important to encourage a decentralization of services, especially education and health.
- Development partners should focus on linking urban and rural development strategies.

DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS SHOULD FOCUS ON LINKING URBAN AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

International Support to I-cities Progress



The participants of the Lleida Forum could confirm, on one hand, the existence of a sense of identity in intermediary cities that goes beyond their specific characteristics or geographical location and, on the other hand, that their development strategies have strong support from UCLG, that has become a platform for members' initiatives, and also from other organizations. Thus, before the Forum came to an end, several organizations and institutions expressed their commitment to the progress of I-cities. Amongst them: the UNESCO Chair of Urban, Regional and Intermediary Cities of the University of Lleida (CIMES network), UN Habitat, Cities Alliance, International Labour organization (ILO), Global Fund for Cities Development

(FMDV) and the Andalusian Fund of Municipalities for International Solidarity (FAMSI). This support involves greater visibility for intermediary cities in worldwide forums.

UCLG'S SUPPORT

The UCLG committee on Urban Strategic Planning has been focusing on Intermediary Cities over the last year. The Lleida Forum was part of a sequence of learning events and exchanges, focussed in Africa and Europe. As expressed by the UCLG committee coordinator, Ms Sara Hoeflich, UCLG recalls that Planning has a political and leadership dimension. The committee launched a policy paper on local leadership and



International Support to I-cities Progress

ACCORDING TO PIERRE MARTINOT-LAGARDE, "SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION HAS DEMONSTRATED TO BE AN EFFICIENT AND COST EFFECTIVE FRAMEWORK FOR DISSEMINATING SOLUTIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT. I-CITIES CAN MAKE USE OF THIS APPROACH TO SHARE KNOWLEDGE, EXPERIENCES AND BEST PRACTICES, AS WELL AS TO SUPPORT CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT, TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER AND EVEN TO MOBILIZE RESOURCES"

strategic planning in 2010, which was mainly based on the experience of large or capital cities. Since 2012, the committee members joined efforts to better know, understand and connect to Intermediary cities and their networks, particularly the CIMES network. This work is has been gathered into the frame document. On a general level, as stated by the Secretary General Josep Roig, Intermediary cities need a stronger voice, more visibility and more networking, and UCLG will serve as the necessary platform to support this. For the coming year, some partnerships are broadened to create knowledge as well as to enable and accompany some city partnerships.

UN HABITAT

The representative of UN Habitat, Laura Petrella, expressed that, apart from supporting the process to Rabat, "our program has many points of contact with the agenda being discussed here in the medium and the long term". UN Habitat is currently working on National Urban Policies. In this sense Petrella stated that, "it could be very interesting to introduce intermediary cities

in this discussion framework", because of the importance that national urban policies have for intermediate cities. She added that, "the debates we have seen here in Lleida on spatial planning and methodology involving both mayors and experts can serve as examples for discussion in many different countries". In relation to the work of UN Habitat on the development of International Guidelines for Urban and Territorial planning, Laura Petrella believes that "it would be worthwhile to incorporate the perspective of medium-sized cities." She also mentioned that a mechanism of collaboration and technical cooperation could be put in place with UCLG, and resource mobilization could be undertaken jointly. Petrella described the Lleida forum as "a breakthrough for thought for strategic planning" and showed her wish to continue in this process.

ILO

The ILO representative, Pierre Martinot-Lagarde, spoke of the next meeting in Rabat emphasizing that there will be roundtables on local economic development and South-South cooperation, and

expressed the will of ILO to continue working with UCLG "always as facilitators, creating links between organizations and individuals". A South-South and Triangular Cooperation Strategy for Intermediary Cities would enable them to create and promote new mechanisms devoted to exchanging information and experiences. It would also provide the basis to develop networks of key actors in the implementation of LED strategies (business, unions, civil society). The ILO strongly supports this initiative, drawing from previous experiences emanating from its own strategy on South-South and triangular cooperation.

CITIES ALLIANCE

Cities Alliance is supporting the UCLG agenda through a joint work programme on city exchange and learning about city development strategies, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa. Cities Alliance also expressed its interest in continuing the I-cities process. The organization representative, Dr Rene Hohmann, referred to the study The Systems of Secondary Cities, explained previously, as a first step to increasing

the visibility of this group of cities, a task that will continue at least until the United Nations Habitat Conference III held in 2016.

FMDV

The representative of this organization, Mariana Nascimento, said that despite the different dynamics of intermediary cities, there is a relevant theme in common: the need for funding. For an organization like FMDV, that is dedicated to facilitate access to financial resources, this is a great challenge. According to Nascimento, "it is true that I-cities have difficulties in this regard but, on the other hand, their size gives them greater ability to innovate in this field and many are already doing it". Nascimento committed to putting I-cities on the FMDV agenda to analyze how these cities operate. Moreover, within the program Resolutions to Fund Cities some tools, trainings and pilot projects are being developed. Some of these projects are deployed up to 2016 and intermediary cities could join them.



UCLG's Goals for i-cities

These are the main objectives of UCLG and its partners for intermediary cities.

- To understand the major characteristics and role of I-cities by summarizing contemporary research and practical experience in focus countries or regions in Africa, Asia, Europe and South America.
- To stimulate a debate on the use of urban strategic planning as a tool, so I-cities can become viable.
- To identify specific areas of interest in order to encourage exchange of experience and practices, revision and enrichment of local government associations agendas
- To develop a document (frame) that summarizes local governments' position on urban strategic planning and policy improvement for I-cities.

Learning and debating will reveal the diversity of actors, planning tools, decision-making as well as indicators for I-cities future planning and strategies.

"DESPIITE THE DIFFERENT DYNAMICS OF INTERMEDIATE CITIES THERE IS A RELEVANT THEME IN COMMON: THE NEED FOR FUNDING, MARIANA NASCIMENTO, FMDV

03

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02

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04

5 Key Questions to some city leaders

- 1 What role do i-cities play in your country?
- 2 What are the main challenges that your city is facing right now?
- 3 Do medium-sized cities have advantages?
- 4 Has your city a strategy to achieve its goals?
- 5 Should intermediate cities join in an international organization or alliance?

5 Key Questions to some city leaders



SANFIS ARLINDO CASTRO
Mayor of Nampula
MOZAMBIQUE



MOHAMED SEFIANI
Mayor of Chefchaouen
MOROCCO



DR. SALINA HAYAT
Mayor of Narayanganj City Corporation
BANGLADESH



HUMBERTO ANTONIO GARCIA
Mayor of San Vicente
ECUADOR



ROBERTA FUSARI
Councillor of Ferrara
ITALY



FERDINAND MAGDAMO AMANTE
Mayor of Butuan City
PHILIPPINES



RICHARD MTHEMBU
Mayor of Kwadukuza
SOUTH AFRICA

1 What role do i-cities play in your country?

A key role is connecting the countryside with the urban world because Mozambique is eminently a rural country. The intermediary city is the first point of access to services for a large number of people living in the countryside.

In Morocco there are some large cities but the number of intermediary cities is much bigger. They are the bridge from the big cities to the countryside and vice versa.

They are very important in defining the country's urbanization process in order to plan this process in the medium and the long term.

They are very important. According to the new constitution of Ecuador local governments have responsibilities and the central government has the commitment to support us financially to carry them out.

Most of the Italian cities are intermediary and the urban fabric of the country is made of these cities.

They are the interface between rural areas and big cities and they work as mediators between these two worlds, especially in the transfer of goods and services.

Government and networks start to see the importance of what they call secondary cities and the need for differentiation.

2 What are the main challenges that your city is facing right now?

It has many but the first one is to consolidate its position as an economic centre.

Clearly, employment and specifically youth employment.

Availability of water and adequate sanitation are enormous problems, besides, poverty reduction has to be a main objective.

To give a better quality of life to the inhabitants of the city because we lacked basic infrastructure: sewage, paved streets, roads, water supply and that is what we are achieving.

Difficulties resulting from the crisis as, for instance, unemployment. This is affecting our city very much. The challenge now is to maintain the social fabric and not losing more jobs.

Perhaps the first one is to overcome reluctance to change and that requires education. The second is to raise funds for the implementation of the projects. In the third place there is improving governance for better planning and resource optimization.

Social and Spatial segregation of White, Indian and Black communities.

3 Do medium-sized cities have advantages?

Yes because their size gives those cities many opportunities for growth and they can generate local attraction.

No doubt, we live better than in a big city and, from the point of view of the mayor, it is easier to manage all infrastructures.

I do not think that size is so important.

Of course they have advantages: we can understand problems better than in a large city and also find the solution in less time.

Definitely, because the relationship of the administration with the people and with social dynamics is easier. Another advantage is that I-cities have a better relationship with the rural territory.

Yes, in the sense that the impact on the environment is lower than in big cities. And because of the limited size planning is much easier.

Clearly they have advantages.

4 Has your city a strategy to achieve its goals?

Our strategy has three axes: fighting poverty, living together peacefully, and fostering participation.

Yes, our vision is the city's ecological and social sustainability and a development model adapted to this principle, according to civil society.

We have a plan for the next 25 years: we want to get a development partner to help us in planning in order to achieve a more organized and greener city.

Solving the issue of basic infrastructure fostering at the same time constant and active citizenship participation.

Ferrara is a city with an economy very much based on culture and cultural tourism and also agriculture. The goal of our strategy is to generate business initiatives from this base.

Our goal is that our people are happier, richer, and that our city does not have to depend so much on the central government.

Improving housing conditions and eliminating the slums are strategic goals.

5 Should intermediate cities join in an international organization or alliance?

What we have to do, first, is to participate in organizations such as UCLG to advance towards more ambitious goals. ambiciosas.

It's time to organize all intermediary cities in a network for visibility, better funding and increasing cooperation.

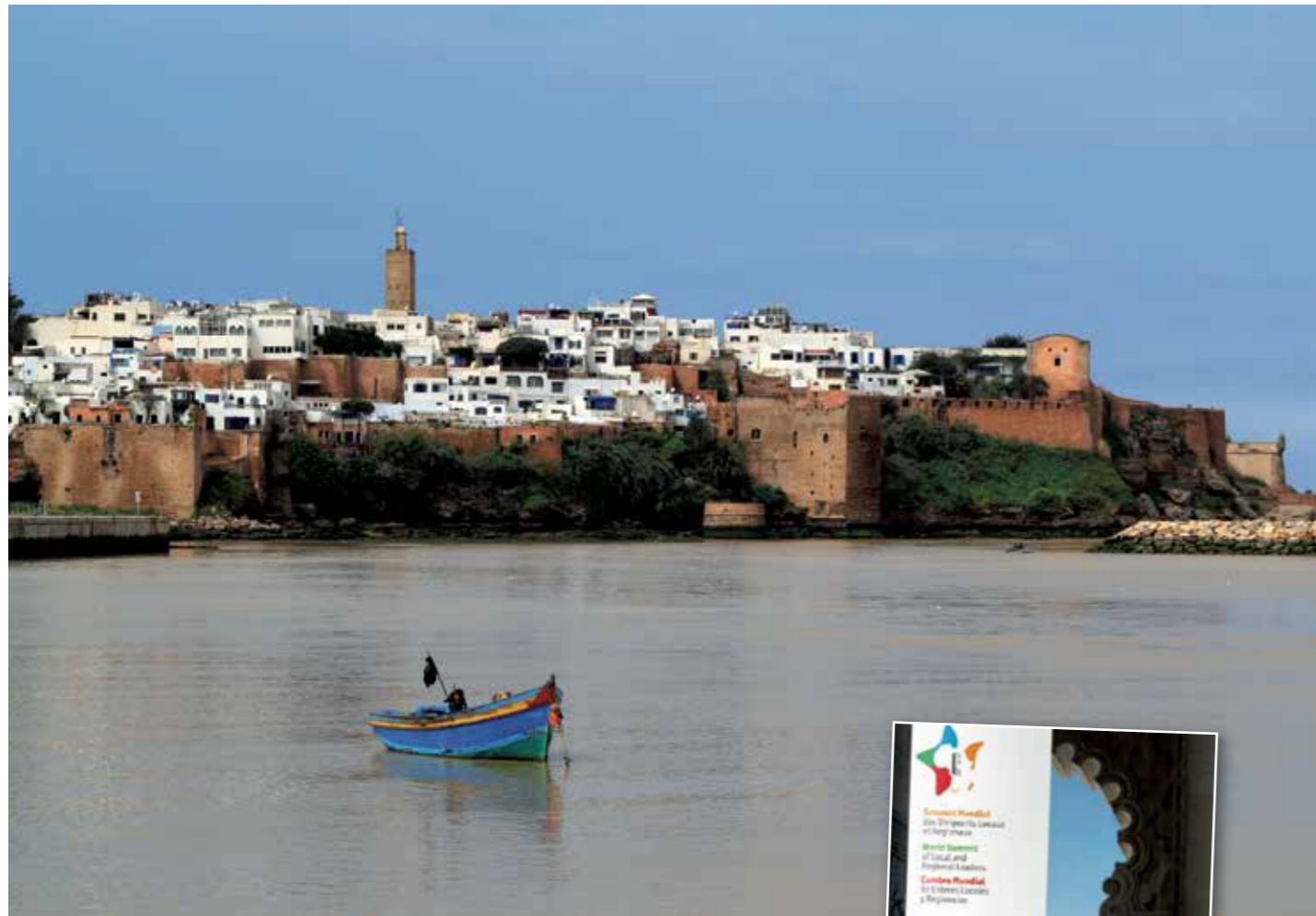
Yes, to get more attention than they receive now and also financial opportunities.

The word "together" is very important for us both locally and globally. Intermediary cities are tens of thousands in the world and that gives us strength. We should join in a legally structured organization, not only to obtain more money, but to cooperate in urban planning responding to our common problems.

Sure it is important to create a global network to strengthen our presence in the national and international context, and also to get to know each other.

The only way to be visible in the world is to be united. We have to have a stronger voice to be heard.

Yes, I think they have to get organized at that level to have a major voice in global forums.



RABAT WORLD CONGRESS An Opportunity

As stated above, a frame document of the proposals that emerged from the Lleida Forum working sessions, together with a summary of the Forum, will be presented in Rabat. The frame document can be regarded as a more precise text detailing the needs, aspirations and strategies related to intermediary cities within the broader context of local government. The specific agenda for Rabat will include three strategic issues for I-Cities:

- Advocating for I-Cities to be recognized as main actors in urbanization processes and challenges, underlining their proactive attitude and their ability to lead.
- Networking for better sharing knowledge for particular interests (for example strengthening rural-urban linkages) and promote city to city South-South cooperation.
- Developing a better scientific knowledge of I-Cities through research, describing and analyzing the current situation (spatial, social, and political aspects).

The Rabat Congress will hold debates on fostering wellbeing, managing diversity, solidarity between territories, and shaping the urban future. In this respect, it is important that intermediary cities are able to show a clearer profile within the great debates of Rabat: the future agenda of the United Nations Development Post-2015, and the process of Habitat III, the 3rd United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, to be held in 2016, which will be the road map for cities until that date. In this near future, UCLG's commitment to I-Cities will keep focusing on promoting knowledge, dialogue and tools for decision-making but also on lobbying for an international support agenda for I-cities.



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UCLG

United Cities Local
and Regional Governments