

Panel D

Making sustainable and empowering the culture of “good living”

Friday 6 July – 16:15-17:30

The UCLG Forum on Intermediary Cities is a consultation and policy development process that culminates in an event every two years. The Forum, conceived as a political process, is led by the City of Chefchaouen with the support of a core group of pilot intermediary cities.

As preparation for the first World Forum of Intermediary Cities, a series of Regional Forums were conducted. During these regional gatherings, discussions led to the identification of challenges and opportunities for intermediary cities as key actors for sustainable development and their particular role in the localization of the different global agendas (Paris Agreement, 2030 Agenda, Sendai Framework, New Urban Agenda).

A series of key topics and recommendations were identified, and provide the inputs to be discussed in the different thematic tables. The key outputs of these sessions will be included in the Charter of the Intermediary Cities of the World.

Intermediary cities should be cities with a high and sustainable quality of life. The panel will envisage solutions and recommendations for intermediary cities to put in place a culture of “good living” in all its components, also integrating the link with rural areas, to be strengthened as one of the major pillars for sustainability.

Issues related to the rural culture and traditions are directly linked to the local development economy: traditional food in compliance with local production and agriculture, in synergy with the characteristics and survival of the planet (resilience).

The question of keeping alive this local culture of gastronomy and way of life through rural economic behaviour, respect for traditions and the peaceful co-habitation of rural and urban inhabitants (*Homo Urbanos* and *Homo Ruralus*) is key.

Possible Framing Questions and Recommendations

How can intermediary cities empower the culture of “good living”?

1. Local economic and social development in intermediary cities

- Strategic frameworks for an alternative economic development, specific to intermediary cities, are needed.
- Intermediary cities, as a specific type of urban settlement, can benefit from mechanisms to access loans for territorial development. Specialized investment funds for intermediary cities at national level are key for sustainable development.
- Existing mechanisms that attract economic activities (industries, infrastructure, etc.) to intermediary cities serve as a catalyst for economic and social growth.
- Policies or plans that enable the creation of decent jobs, in line with the principles of sustainable development, are key for the successful localization of the SDGs.
- Mechanisms and/or instruments are needed to support life in rural areas and keep it attractive, in order to preserve or regenerate the local economy, maintaining its assets and strengths. This would help in:
 - Fostering a connection with the rest of the country and to the rest of the world

- Empowering a system of I-Cities to build their branding around a common authenticity and become players at the world level (international markets)

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The territory as an eco-responsible system: Using the territory of the intermediary city as an instrument in itself for the preservation of the natural and inhabited environment. Intermediary cities are an essential pillar to assume responsibility for the eco-responsible system, allowing to manage the fluctuation of the investments without unbalancing territorial sustainability.

2. Empowering the eco-responsible system through smart technologies: Helping and assisting people to be more productive in their vision of the rural economy by introducing intelligent technology, modern behaviours and smart agendas within the territories at a large scale, uniting systems of I-Cities.

- Developing R&D centres in the intermediary cities: instead of "brain drain", opt for "brain back": bringing back the brains and talents.

3. Local culture is a key element of an eco-responsible system: The United Nations has set a definition on minimum cultural services for citizens (UNESCO). Culture is also a vital element of social integration and coexistence.

- National policy of support for the responsible eco-system: The management of intermediary cities needs to be structured around national development plans to allow national expenses for tourism, trails, cultures and local traditions to be preserved (*rural life is considered as heritage to be protected in all its dimensions, and intermediary cities can benefit from the development of strategic plans that take into account cultural diversity*).
- Capacity building for local staff to support the promotion of cultural and heritage potential to promote a sense of place and identity, belonging and creativity.

2. Strategic planning to support "good living"

- The "good living" concept linked to fostering relationships: the question of keeping alive the local culture of bonds and behaviour, respect for traditions and the peaceful co-existence of *Homo Urbanus* and *Homo Ruralis*.
- Paving the way for green areas in roads and villages that are currently expanding.
- How to spatialize these proportions: how to correctly calculate the balance between new construction and nature?

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Concept of "Green land in the territory" (Green-LT):
 - The Green-LT: Concept of the "Coefficient of Land Covering" (the 'COS-Vert'): Balance between the territory, nature and construction: which instruments could help local municipalities in defining a bold extension in the limit of the city, but as a place to live in, setting specific rules to master a balance between urban and rural? Concept of evolutive planning and concept of green rate of occupation of land

- Developing strategic and evolutive planning in the urban areas of the territory, making sure that the green areas are proportional to the built-up areas.
- Putting in place housing policies for each inhabitant in zones of high value and quality of life, bringing an added value to the intermediary city, and at the same time allowing to receive migrants from the rural areas, the metropolis and other countries in a decent way, protecting the rights of each and every one of them.
- Intermediation in the landscape as generating value capture: the 'in-between' rural-urban area is a limit that should not be treated as the waste place for contaminating industries and activities or as the waste deposit of the city. This concept of land value capture will support the preservation of quality of life through planning and strategizing for the long term, preserving the link to nature and healthy life: capturing value from urbanization.

3. Sustainable and responsible consumption and production patterns

- The local economy value chain: question of rural culture and traditions located in the generation of Local Economic Development: traditional food compliance with local production and agriculture and with gastronomy centred in synergy with the quality of the planet, characteristics and survival.
- Production and consumption: enhancing and encouraging the strengths and potential to be empowered.
- Promote the use of organic products for grooming and food responsibility when consuming agro-organic products.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Developing policies about responsibilities in rural and urban areas, including interaction and the whole eco-system, to enhance a responsible mind-set
- Sharing lessons about the "development of solidarity" as examples of responsible consumption and endemic production.
- Generating a cycle of regeneration of the value chain in the local economy stimulated by local consumption: "the right consumption and production to allow for the resilience of the circle of regeneration without overexploitation".