



The Global Campaign on Urban Governance

Concept Paper, 2nd Edition
March 2002

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ISBN: 92-1-131638-3
HS/650/02E

Printing History:

1st Edition: November 2000
2nd Revised Edition: March 2002

**The Global Campaign on Urban Governance
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SUMMARY

The development goal of the Global Campaign on Urban Governance is to contribute to the eradication of poverty through improved urban governance. It aims to increase the capacity of local governments and other stakeholders to practice good urban governance and to raise awareness of and advocate for good urban governance around the world. The campaign focuses attention on the needs of the excluded urban poor. The campaign promotes the involvement of women in decision-making at all levels, recognizing that women are one of the biggest levers for positive change in society. In so doing, the campaign will make a significant contribution to implementing the Habitat Agenda goal of sustainable human settlements development and to the United Nations' action strategy for halving extreme poverty by 2015.¹

The campaign theme – “inclusiveness” – reflects both the campaign's vision and strategy. The vision is to realize the “**Inclusive City**,” a place where everyone, regardless of wealth, gender, age, race or religion, is enabled to participate productively and positively in the opportunities cities have to offer. Inclusive decision-making processes are an essential means to achieve this and are the cornerstone of the campaign. The concept of inclusiveness links the governance campaign to UN-HABITAT's Global Campaign for Secure Tenure.²

Based on its own experience working with cities, UN-HABITAT has initiated a global debate by arguing that good urban governance is characterized by the principles of sustainability, subsidiarity, equity, efficiency, transparency and accountability, civic engagement and citizenship, and security, and that these principles are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. Through a participatory process at the local, national, regional and global levels, the campaign is facilitating a debate on these principles of good urban governance.

¹ See UN Development Group, “Halving Extreme Poverty: An Action Strategy for the United Nations” Final Draft, 10 November 1999.

² See “Global Campaign for Secure Tenure: Implementing The Habitat Agenda - Adequate Shelter For All,” <http://www.un-habitat.org/tenure>

The campaign supports the increasing number of initiatives worldwide aimed at improving governance as a means to achieve sustainable development. By focusing on the city level, the campaign complements these efforts and builds on UN-HABITAT's experience in urban issues. Almost all of UN-HABITAT's programmes, regardless of their strategic entry point, promote good governance. The governance campaign distills and focuses lessons of experience so that they can be harmonised with those of partners and applied more widely.

To this end, the campaign must be a model of good governance, both in process and outcome. It is guided in its operation by the principles of inclusiveness and decentralisation. To the maximum degree possible, implementation will be decentralised to regional networks of partners. A global Steering Group consisting of UN-HABITAT and key strategic partners guides the campaign design, implementation and evaluation.

The campaign has the following “Flagship Products”:

- Declaration on the Norms of Good Urban Governance;
- National Campaigns for Good Urban Governance;
- Policy Papers Series;
- Revised National Legislation;
- Inclusive Cities Initiative;
- Good Urban Governance Index; and
- Good Urban Governance Toolkit Series.

This paper outlines the *why*, *what* and *how* of the campaign. It is designed to flesh out key concepts, place the campaign in the broader international urban policy and operational context, generate debate internally within UN-HABITAT and with external partners and act as a catalyst to drive the campaign. It remains a “work in progress,” subject to modification as the clarity of the vision improves and partner contributions are incorporated.

UN-HABITAT prepared two internal drafts of the concept paper before sending a third draft to external partners for feedback. Comments from over 30 external reviewers were incorporated into Draft 4. Draft 4 was reviewed by partners at the first meeting of the campaign's Global Steering Group held

in Nairobi in May 2000. The paper was presented and discussed at more than 30 international and regional meetings during 2000 and 2001. The current draft includes revisions to section 3.0, “How the Campaign Works” to update the campaign’s phasing and strategies.

1.0 Why a Campaign on Urban Governance?

The argument for good urban governance is clear. Most of humanity will soon live in cities, and the trend of urbanization is irreversible. Cities hold tremendous potential as engines of economic and social development, creating jobs and generating ideas through economies of scale and creative and innovative civic cultures. Cities today, however, can also generate and intensify social exclusion, denying the benefits of urban life to the poor, to women, to youth, and to religious or ethnic minorities and other marginalized groups. It is UN-HABITAT’s experience, derived from over 20 years of work with cities, that the key ingredient to realizing the Inclusive City is neither money nor technology, nor even expertise (although these are important), but good urban governance.

This argument, however, must be situated in the broader policy and operational context of the Habitat Agenda, the recently concluded restructuring of UN-HABITAT and the international community’s poverty reduction efforts. There is an emerging consensus that good governance is the *sine qua non* for sustainable human and settlements development.

1.1 The Habitat Agenda

The 1996 Habitat II Conference, dubbed “The City Summit” drew the world’s

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