

# **STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

## **2010 – 2016**

**United  
Cities and  
Local  
Governments**





## CONTENTS

<b>Introduction</b>	4
Bringing the added value of local and regional authorities to the global discussions	
<b>The Vision of the Funders: a Current Vision</b>	6
The vision of CGLU	
<b>New Times; Focused Objectives</b>	7
A summary of key objectives	
<b>Development of the Objectives</b>	
I. Leadership and Governance	8
II. Representation	10
III. Intelligence	12
IV. Cooperation	14
V. Organization	16

# INTRODUCTION

## ***Bringing the added value of local and regional authorities to the global discussions***

*The creation of United Cities and Local Governments in 2004 was the fruition of many years of exchanges among the local and regional leaders of the world. They were working internationally through different organizations but for a common cause.*

### **Unity**

The ideals that united us all were based on the conviction that a “world advocate of democratic local self-government, promoting the values, objectives and interests of local and regional governments of all shapes and sizes, through joint action” was possible and highly necessary.

UCLG’s work programme during the first six years of existence has emphasized the need to create a respected organization before the international community; it has focused on enabling the contacts among members and has tried to put in place a flexible structure at the service of its heterogeneous membership.

### **A special perspective: Our shared value**

The Habitat II conference in Istanbul in 1996 was the moment that triggered the thought of going from joint values to joint action. The shared conviction about the unique perspective that the proximity to the citizens of local and regional governments provides to the discussions and solutions on global issues is of great relevance now, more than ever before.

The past decades have seen important changes in the international institutional framework; we have also witness the transformation from a rural to an urban world. Local governments are more and more at the forefront in facing many of the global challenges. In this context, it is not surprising that our organization has been granted access to new spaces in the international decision-making processes.

We have also seen important disappointments, with insufficient tangible commitments about the role of local and regional authorities in international agreements; with worrying trends towards recentralization of powers and resources in some parts of the world and serious suffering of our citizens due to the world financial and economic crisis.

### **New challenges**

We are further experiencing innovation and hope. We see the youth in our cities wanting to promote change. We enjoy the capacity of rethinking ourselves and discovering new ways forward. Our ability to acknowledge change and opportunities will be pivotal for a sustainable future. This will happen only if we work together in our united organization, UCLG.

## **On our way to the Third United Nations Conference on Habitat**

Our Mexico Manifesto on the City of 2030 provides already a clear picture of the work before us. The organization has done collective thinking on what local and regional authorities around the world need to achieve for their citizens. It is now time for self evaluation and for daring proposals on our way towards the Third United Nations' Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III).

The questions the present document tries to address are:

- What are we together for and what are the priorities we need to establish to promote our shared value?
- What kind of global organization do we need?

UCLG gathers the governments of proximity, the governments more closely responsible for the daily life of the citizens. In the work of local and regional governments all issues are intertwined and priorities should be defined taking into account their impact on the local territories and the populations they house.

Experience around the world shows that any change impacting people at local level challenges local and regional governments in their capacity to coordinate actions beyond a sector approach: It calls them to mobilize stakeholders, to address inclusive growth and development, and to interface with the other spheres of public governance for more efficiency.

Local governments are called upon to achieve a broader global understanding of the important perspectives that the proximity brings to solutions of global issues. This is why UCLG strives to promote and consolidate decentralization as a way to democratize and modernize public governance at all levels.

It is also the reason behind UCLG's advocacy for local self-government as a requisite for true participation of people in the management of their own business. The perspective put forward by UCLG is that development and improvement of the people's living conditions should be witnessed primarily at the local level.

The Organization needs to be flexible and build on strong political leadership to ensure that these values are largely shared among the members and gain momentum in the general debate on good governance.

In this era of global networks, UCLG, as the global network of local and regional governments, needs to expand its contacts and allow for exchanges beyond the membership. It needs to build on local and global knowledge and intelligence to ensure access to diverse views and innovative solutions.

UCLG should become more proactive in setting agendas. It should become a broadly respected stakeholder on the international arena, so that the local and regional government perspective inspires and nurtures the definition and implementation of global international agendas on issues influencing the lives of communities.

## THE VISION OF THE FOUNDERS: A CURRENT VISION

Our founders created UCLG as the united voice and world advocate of democratic local self-government- promoting its values, objectives and interests, through cooperation between local governments, and within the wider international community.

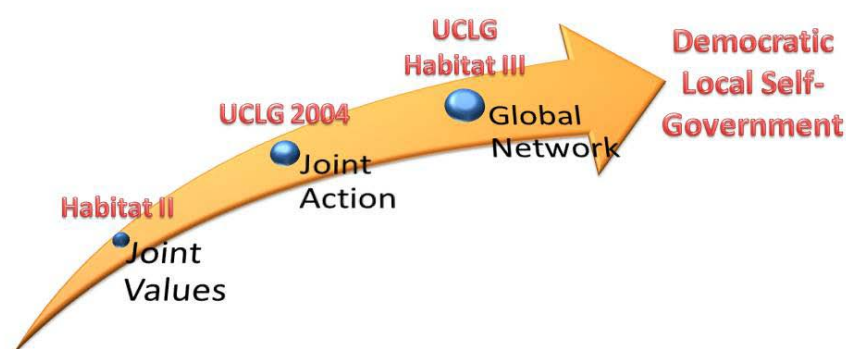
Representatives of local and regional governments the world over, serving the populations of rural and urban communities; small, medium and large towns, metropolises and regions; gather in UCLG to bring to the international community the following message:

***The proximity we have to citizens and the multi-sectoral approach in managing the living environment provides us with a unique vision when approaching global issues.***

***We share the conviction that many global issues find their solutions in local commitments and engagements. We pledge that any efficient solution to global issues should build on the perspective and inputs of local and regional governments. UCLG, as their network, should be formally recognized as a full party in all global debates.***

Having to cope with the daily demands and needs of the people we represent at local level and being at the forefront in addressing the Millennium Development Goals as well as the Climate Change and sustainable development agendas, local governments enjoy governance and professionals skills that should be considered as a critical asset when it comes to addressing the peaceful cohabitation of people the world round. Therefore acknowledging a greater role to decentralized cooperation and further dedicated financial resources is highly desirable and will only contribute to improve the development effectiveness agenda.

In summary, UCLG brings to the world its commitment to contributing to the peaceful sustainable development of our planet and fostering the wellbeing of the billions of citizens settled in our territories through their mobilization and participation in the management of their own lives and business at local level, and through the continuing improvement in the provision of public services.

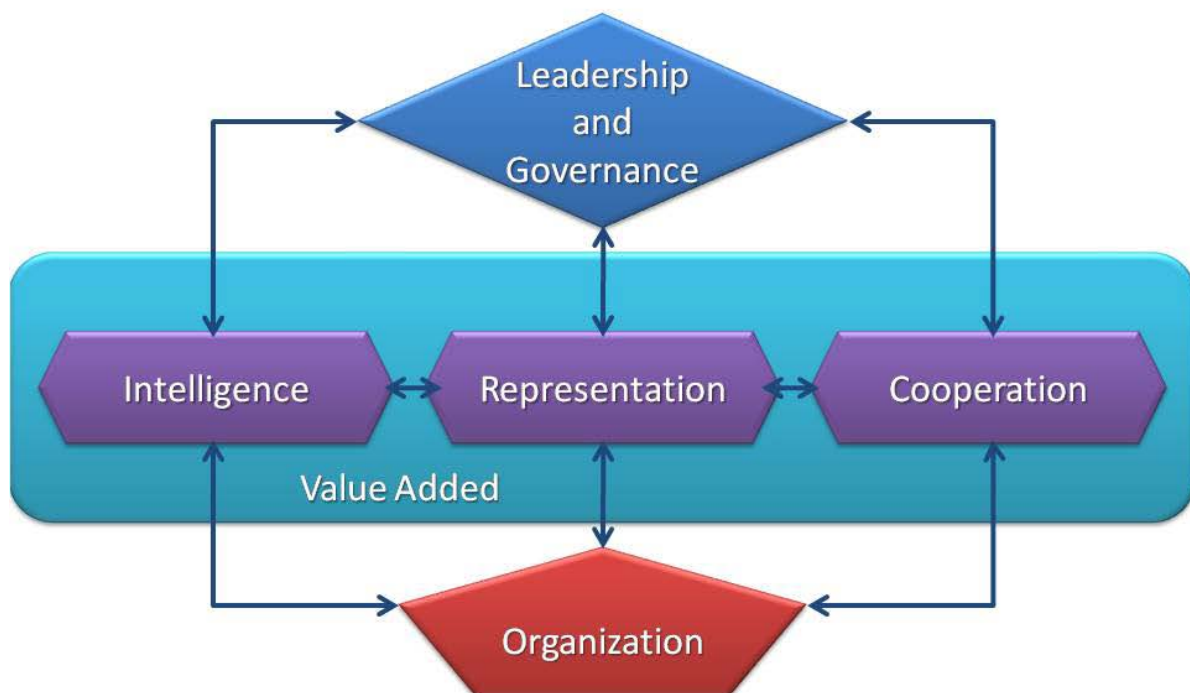


## NEW TIMES; FOCUSED OBJECTIVES

A strong leadership with sound intelligence, generated and building on the skills of the network expresses the special vision of local governments before the international community, influencing global governance and cooperating together in the spirit of solidarity.

### The tasks ahead:

- **Leadership and governance:** To develop a strong democratic organization to ensure the active participation of political leaders from all spheres and diversity of local governments who will shape the agenda of the organization and drive its actions working towards collective positions;
- **Representation:** To promote local and regional self-government as well as other shared values around the world, and increase their influence on global governance and policy-making at all levels in issues of interest.
- **Intelligence:** To gather, analyze and share knowhow and information at the service of members and stakeholders.
- **Cooperation:** To promote decentralized cooperation and international cooperation between local governments and their associations; to promote peer to peer ties as a means for mutual learning, solidarity and friendship between people and help mobilizing resources for cooperation.
- **Organization:** To strengthen UCLG's organization, through the operational role of Committees, Sections and the World Secretariat, and its relation with other networks and institutions.



## I. LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

UCLG's existence cannot be understood without the full presence and participation of political leadership from: mayors, councillors, presidents of regional authorities and local government associations from around the world. It is their visions, convictions and commitment that has driven UCLG's creation but also its priorities.

The participation of local and regional political leaders in UCLG has been a significant trademark and added value of our organization over the past years. An added value that has been acknowledged and appreciated by partners the world round.

Building on this strength, consolidating the participation of political representatives and improving and fostering the creation of new leadership are the aims underlining the objective set out in the following pages.

UCLG does not only need leadership to define its actions and to ensure representation for the global movement of local and regional authorities. UCLG also carries the responsibility to foster new leadership. It needs to promote the idea that our membership can bring important contributions to the definition, understanding and implementation of the international agendas.

With this in mind, efforts will be necessary to bring further clarity in our governance, further democracy in decision-making and greater commitment to active participation at the political level.

UCLG's leadership participation in articulating international messages, highlighting local government perspective and providing hands-on local government experience, should be at the heart of UCLG action. UCLG's message is legitimized by daily local experiences of its members at the service of the citizens around the world.

UCLG's leadership is not to be understood under institutional headings, it is not limited to the statutory bodies, but rather to the totality of the political representation throughout the membership.

UCLG's leadership will continue undersigning UCLG's principles and global aims aiming at becoming even more inclusive and balanced, sensitive to shared values but also pioneer of change.



# LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

## Objective I

To develop a strong democratic organization to ensure the active participation of political leaders from all spheres and diversity of local governments who will shape the agenda of the organization and drive its actions working towards collective positions

## FUNCTIONS

*Leadership; visioning and strategy; communication; resource mobilization*

### Strategies:

#### 1. Enhancing political participation and shared leadership

##### Actions to undertake

- 1.1. Promote political debates at statutory meetings and the full political participation in all structures
- 1.2. Facilitate possibilities for international balanced representation throughout the membership
- 1.3. Foster exchange mechanisms (i.e. forums) among UCLG leadership

#### 2. Strengthen UCLG's governance

##### Actions to undertake

- 2.2. Revise the format of statutory meetings
- 2.3. Provide solution for representation of regional governments
- 2.4. Increase representation of women
- 2.5. Enhance clarity on decision making processes
- 2.6. Update and redefine the composition and functions existing standing committees such as Financial Management Committee, Statutory Affairs

#### 3. Develop vision and strategy and align stakeholders

##### Actions to undertake

- 3.1. Proactively develop an International Local and Regional Agenda towards Habitat III
- 3.2. Deploy the implementation of the strategic plan
- 3.3. Reach strategic alliances with selected partners
- 3.4. Create opportunities for interaction among members and partners

#### 4. Developing an effective communication system

##### Actions to undertake

- 4.1. Update the communication tools
- 4.2. Foster global conversations to create common understanding and action to address global issues
- 4.3. Define communication tools for leaders to increase UCLG visibility internationally

#### 5. Promoting resource mobilization for the local and regional government movement

##### Actions to undertake

- 5.1. Create a Resource Mobilization Group to analyze sustainability of UCLG

## RESOURCES

*Members - World Council - Executive Bureau – Presidency – Sections – Financial Management Committee- Committee on Statutory Affairs – –Committees and working groups - World Secretariat*

## II. REPRESENTATION

Voicing local and regional government's needs and interests is at the outset of the international movement of local governments that is almost a hundred years.

The creation of UCLG responded to the demand of further strengthened representation and answer to the motto "united voice: stronger voice".

Achieving recognition of local governments as a self-governing and distinct sphere of government before national authorities and the international community, in particular the United Nations, has been and will remain at the top of UCLG's agenda.

Local and regional leaders advocate for granting special status to UCLG before the UN. This would allow them to play their full part in the international decision making processes. At a continental level similar efforts will be made by the UCLG Sections to gain the same kind of recognition before the relevant regional institutions.

Through its balanced representation of all types and levels of sub-national governments, UCLG provides a privileged channel to link the agendas of the international community to the concerns of people at local level. It can ensure that the experience and skills of local and regional governments reach and inspire the international community in its agenda setting.

Through our informed leadership we will promote shared values and visions around local and regional self-government with adequate competences and means. With acknowledged roles and voice.

At the moment when the earth welcomes 7 billion inhabitants and when the majority of humanity is urban, we need to ensure that the experience and skills of local and regional authorities reach the international decisions.

The current international agenda for urban settlements (deriving from Habitat II) is outdated. In the XXI century the rise of cities is broadly acknowledged, Urbanization is recognized to be unavoidable and can be positively managed.

UCLG will invest its efforts in shaping the international agenda, in particular that of Habitat III. The current agreements on sustainability do not reflect the effects of the urban explosion in the past decades and the new urban-rural linkages as well as the prominent role of secondary cities and regional authorities.

The network will develop and renew policy positions that will be presented before all relevant international actors.

# REPRESENTATION

## Objective II

To promote local and regional self-government around the world and increase its influence on global governance and policy-making at all levels in issues of interest.

## FUNCTIONS

*Recognition, policy and advocacy*



### Strategies:

#### 1. Achieving recognition of UCLG as the voice of the local and regional government movement

##### Actions to undertake

- 1.1. Establish a road map for obtaining a special status for UCLG before the United Nations UCLG
- 1.2. Regional Sections will strive to be awarded the same kind of status before the regional institutions
- 1.3. Enhance UCLG's role in UNACLA
- 1.4. Ensure UCLG representation before Habitat III and the preparation of a Second World Assembly of cities, local/regional authorities and their associations.

#### 2. DEVELOPING INTERNATIONAL POLICY:

Contribute to the development of an international local and regional government policy agenda

##### Actions to undertake

- 2.1. Gathering and making accessible existing local and regional policy
- 2.2. Develop new policy positions in particular aiming at Habitat III
- 2.3. Ensure a relevant role of local and regional governments in the MDGs review

#### 3. ADVOCACY:

Fostering decentralization and other shared values; Promoting knowledge of UCLG's agenda among partners; Promoting ownership of the UCLG agenda by members; Local and regional financial mobilization at national, regional and international level

##### Actions to undertake

- 3.1. Enhancing information opportunities for members
- 3.2. Lobbying multilateral organizations, including UN and Banking institutions
- 3.3. Lobbying national governments
- 3.4. Lobbying local governments
- 3.5. Lobbying civil society
- 3.6. Lobbying private sector
- 3.7. Developing strategic partnerships with other networks

## RESOURCES

*Presidency - Members - Sections - Committees and working groups –  
Relations with other international local government networks –  
Lessons learned from Programmes developed by the network - Relations with  
multilateral organizations - Relations with national governments - World  
Secretariat*

### III. INTELLIGENCE

Leadership and representation need to be built on sound cornerstones around information and analyses.

UCLG should to develop its capacity to gather existing intelligence and producing new positions. This exercise should reflect the variety of cultures, potentials and skills within the membership.

The work of Committees and Working Groups should be an integral part of the intelligence and knowledge management of the organization.

Greater efforts should be invested in fostering ownership of products within and outside of the membership. Our capacity to operate as a network of networks will be strongly linked with the capacity to promote ownership of messages that are produced both within and outside of the Organization . These messages however should carry our values and convictions.

It is imperative to make full use of the modern communication technologies to both gather and disseminate knowledge. The generalized access to information will request further engagement from the UCLG network to provide a safe-port and content analyses.

The Global Observatory on Decentralization and Local Democracy (GOLD) should consolidate and expand in three different dimensions: as source of information, and knowledge, as advocacy tool and mobilization mechanism around focus areas.

GOLD should build on and contribute to develop UCLG´s added value. UCLG should further consolidate its capacity to determine the trends, topics of interest and opinions of the membership.

The possibilities of social networking and online exchange among peers will need to be further developed.

# INTELLIGENCE

## Objective III

To become an important source of knowhow at the service of the membership and partners

## FUNCTIONS

*Gathering, analysing and sharing knowledge and information*

### ▼ Strategies

#### 1. **Gathering and analysing information and knowledge:**

Becoming the key reference on the state of the art regarding decentralization and democratic local and regional governments in the world

##### **Actions to undertake**

- 1.1. Develop GOLD as a multidimensional research and collective thinking process with different products, including a global triennial report.
- 1.2. Develop Indicators on Decentralization

#### 2. **Sharing:** Making local government knowledge available to members

##### **Actions to undertake**

- 2.1. Develop a comprehensive portal and gateway on decentralization and local democracy
- 2.2. Enhance information tools such as the International Municipal Library
- 2.3. Providing access to local government knowledge produced worldwide
- 2.4. Develop communication systems (social networks, publications)
- 2.5. Function as a virtual gateway on information concerning available training and capacity building

#### 3. **Identifying key topics of interest for the membership**

##### **Actions to undertake**

- 3.1. Developing surveys
- 3.2. Analyzing trends

## RESOURCES

*Knowledge produced by our members and partners –  
Observatories on Local Government Topics - Products by Sections –  
Content developed in Committees and working groups –  
Lessons learned from Programmes - World Secretariat*

## IV. COOPERATION

Exchanging experiences with peers and finding joint solutions to complex problems have also been at the heart of the birth of the international movement. UCLG should contribute to local governments supporting other local governments throughout the world.

The principles of solidarity, the promotion of dialogue and friendship among people are important pillars of our World Organization. These values have been developed through many decades of joint work, technical exchanges and cooperation.

Decentralized cooperation, in all its formats, has proven to be an excellent vehicle for innovation and renewal. Sharing the lessons learned, good or bad, with colleagues and peers has an added value for the political leaders and their teams that cannot be equalled by any other capacity building method.

UCLG needs to be a safe-port where new ideas and methodologies can be tested; where specific thematic learning circles and communities of practice are developed addressing the concrete urgencies and interests of the members.

UCLG as a whole should be dedicated to promoting cooperation. In times when the global financial crisis leads to restricting the cooperation commitments of the international community, UCLG should safeguard international solidarity and cooperation among members.

It should develop innovative ideas and partnerships, with the ultimate goal of continuously bettering the living conditions of all, in full respect of diversity and dignity. Lessons learned in these experiences will feed into the intelligence and representation work.

UCLG should take advantage of the experience accumulated by its members and partners in this domain, in particular through successful implementation of decentralized cooperation initiatives, to plead for a significant increase of international funding to be channeled through decentralized cooperation mechanisms.

# COOPERATION

## Objective IV

To promote decentralized cooperation and international cooperation between local governments and their associations; to promote, peer to peer ties as a means for mutual learning, solidarity and friendship between people, and help mobilizing resources for cooperation.

## FUNCTIONS

*Develop concepts; implement capacity building and resource mobilization*

### ▼ Strategies:

#### **1. To promote decentralized cooperation and international cooperation between local governments and their associations**

##### **Actions to undertake**

- 1.1. Develop a position on Municipal International Cooperation
- 1.2. Organize lobby sessions before international community

#### **2. To promote peer to peer ties, such as mentoring, as a means for mutual learning and friendship between peoples**

##### **Actions to undertake**

- 2.1. Develop mutual training programs
- 2.2. Test new formats for cooperation
- 2.3. Promote the implementation of best practices and lessons learned

#### **3. Defining thematic calendars for learning**

##### **Actions to undertake**

- 3.1. Develop action learning

#### **4. Fostering funding and resource mobilization for local governments**

##### **Actions to undertake**

- 4.1. Develop corporate partners programme
- 4.2. Support the development of financial mechanisms for local and regional governments, such as the FMDV

## RESOURCES

*Municipal International Cooperation activities developed by members -  
Programmes developed by partners –  
Programmes developed by the Sections –  
Programmes developed by the World Secretariat –  
Committees and Working Groups - Existing training institutions*

## V. ORGANIZATION

UCLG is and should be perceived beyond its World Secretariat and its Sections. These will need to be structured in a way that allows its members to fully engage in different thematic activities at different geographic levels.

The network will need to further develop its ties with the Sections through the development of joint priorities. Additional efforts will need to be made to ensure cross-fertilization and develop joint work programmes among the different components of the network, including the Committees and Working Groups. This would enable greater coherence in policy development and significantly increase our capacity of action.

Developing further working relations with other types of partners, from national governments to civil society and other networks of local authorities will represent a distinct mark of this period of UCLG.

Experimentation with new technological tools will be promoted in order to ensure further communication with members.

Facilitating the work in thematic areas, through: committees, thematic networks, forums or think tanks, is at the core of the work of the organization as a whole.

UCLG will need to guarantee the continuity of a motivated and flexible team of professionals reflecting the variety of the membership and able to adapt to the changing demands both at the World Secretariat and the UCLG Sections.

The changing financial environment and the growing aspirations of the network will require finding new means to ensure financial sustainability and identifying alternative sources of funding.



# ORGANIZATION

## Objective V

Ensuring an **effective** world network, reinforcing UCLG's organization, through the operational role of committees, regional sections and the world secretariat, and its relation with other networks, partners and institutions

## FUNCTIONS

*Finances, Human Resources; ICT; Relation with members, Committees and Section, Networks and Partners*

## ▼ Strategies

### 1. Defining how to work as a network of networks

#### Actions to undertake

- 1.1. Develop joint work programmes with regional sections
- 1.2. Enhance relations with other networks and partners
- 1.3. Corporate Partners Program

### 2. Develop membership relations

#### Actions to undertake

- 2.1. Clarify membership-fees contributions to the organization as a whole
- 2.2. Define a membership campaign

### 3. Strengthen role of committees and working groups

#### Actions to undertake

- 3.1. Ensure links with the international agenda
- 3.2. Facilitate inputs to UCLG's strategies and global work programme
- 3.3. Enhancing the ownership of work developed by Committees and Working Groups

### 4. Enhancing Communications

#### Actions to undertake

- 4.1. Develop new communication tools
- 4.2. Further expand the UCLG portals
- 4.3. Enhance communication flows on issues of relevance for the network

### 5. Achieving a sound financial system

#### Actions to undertake

- 4.1. Implement new methods of resource mobilization

### 6. Strengthening and developing human resources

#### Actions to undertake

- 6.1. Provide renewed opportunities
- 6.2. Monitoring of career development possibilities
- 6.3. Training

### 7. Renewal of ICT facilities

#### Actions to undertake

- 7.1. Identify useful new ICT
- 7.2. Renew equipment
- 7.3. Acquire new tools for communication with network

## RESOURCES

*Members - World Council - Executive Bureau – Presidency –  
Financial Management Committee – Auditors –  
Committees and working groups – Sections - World Secretariat*