

Goa, 3-5 April 2008

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**Background note to the session on CITY TO CITY COOPERATION & JAWAHARLAL NEHRU NATIONAL URBAN RENEWAL MISSION (JNNURM)**

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**The Added Value of City to City Cooperation**

**The Urbanization Era**

In the unprecedented urbanizing era with one third of humanity living in cities, local authorities' role in development of communities is becoming crucial. Facing the most burning challenges of humanity in the coming years will need to start in the most populated areas of our planet in the cities. Strong, efficient and well resourced local governments will be the cornerstone of developed societies.

*"It is in cities that we are testing new responses to the problems of the present and the future. The city is a space for living and for innovation, as well as a laboratory for ideas. The city is becoming more relevant than ever before because it is in scale with the citizen..."*

Paris, May 2004 - UCLG President Bertrand Delanoë addressing the Founding Congress

India's visionary JNNURM fits into the vision of positive urbanization aiming at making cities ready for the future. Investing in cities infrastructure and in the fight against poverty in one of the most rapidly urbanizing countries, home to three of the top ten metropolis of the planet is no longer an option but a must.

*"Our message to you today is this: We are committed to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and we are ready to support the United Nations Secretariat in its efforts [to achieve them.] We are convinced that States must keep the promises they made in 2000 and we are here today to show how effective we can be when we work together."*

New York, September 2005 – UCLG President Paco Moncayo during the UCLG World Mayors' Delegation to the United Nations

**Municipal International Cooperation versus City to City Cooperation**

Cooperation between towns, cities, regions and local authorities in general has been gaining ground in the last decennia and proven to be a very efficient tool for development. The traditional city twinning which played a crucial role in the cohesion of Europe after World War II, have evolved into truly technical assistance programmes of all kinds based on peer to peer learning.

Municipal International Cooperation, Decentralised Cooperation and City to City cooperation are all different principles used many times indistinctively. All of the above stress different dimensions of one and the same principle local governments' driven development.

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While Municipal International Cooperation stresses the importance of learning from practitioners and provides a very important role to local government associations and city networks, many use the concept of Decentralised Cooperation emphasising the use of wealthy local governments resources to support less advanced local authorities. In the case of the trendy concept City to City cooperation, the direct link between two city governments or city agencies is the most important feature.

### **Peer to Peer Learning: The must of City to City Partnerships**

The international movement of local governments united in the World Organization of United Cities and Local Governments has been developing since 1913 the concept of peer to peer learning among local authorities and promotes the development of programmes with all the above values and principles building on the following imperative common features:

- Demand driven processes
- Involvement and commitment of the local political leadership
- Long-term commitment is needed
- Mutual retributions are important: two-way streamed process
- Implementation should be in hands of the beneficiary
- Expertise should come from local government practitioners

The development and the success of partnerships among towns and regions are based, in most of the cases, also on the support of local government associations and other city networks (especially for small and medium sized local authorities).

Cooperation among cities and local governments builds on the similarity of the mandates that local authorities around the world need to fulfill, no matter what their realities are economically or culturally are, they still need to serve communities in an array of services that are broadly comparable. They will need to ensure urban planning, waste management, water distribution, fire protection, provide a secure environment for the citizens and often manage school and health services.

A well managed relation between local authorities and other spheres of government is also a shared characteristic which is of importance for the success of any development project that is put in place involving local governments.

### **Advantages of City to City Cooperation in the Indian context**

- Knowledge network: City to City Cooperation can offer Indian Cities a platform to get to know what others are doing around the world.
- Solidarity network: The added value of this kind of co-operation stays in long term actions and direct friendship established both at officers level and at community level, making the capacity building of human resources at the grass roots level possible.

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- The city to city co-operation offers expertise and skills, which are close to the local way of working avoiding the dynamics of the big international interventions, which follow different logics and macro-economic needs.
- City to City Cooperation strengthens the capacities of local actors to be part of the making process and its participatory planning. Local Government practitioners from different parts of the world speak similar languages.
- Learning from others' mistakes and being able to take a shorter learning curve is also an often mentioned advantage among participants of this type of initiatives.

### **United Cities and Local Governments and the Euro India Forum: The door for Indian Cities into the World**

Founded in May 2004, *United Cities and Local Governments* (UCLG) is the united voice and world advocate of democratic local self-government. Based in Barcelona, UCLG is the largest local government organization in the world. Representing over half the world's population, the cities and association members of UCLG are present in 136 UN Member States across seven world regions – Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe, Eurasia, Middle East and West Asia, Latin America and North America. Over 1000 cities are direct members of United Cities and Local Governments, as well as 120 national associations which represent all the cities and local governments in a single country.

United Cities and Local Government has a decentralised structure with 7 World Regions and 1 Metropolitan Section. The work of UCLG is developed by Local Government's lead Committees and Working Groups ranging from Mobility, City Diplomacy to Social Inclusion and Local Finance. The members of UCLG have strong cooperation ties, both in city to city initiatives and in city networks involvement.

The development of a partnership with the Euro-India Centre and playing an active role in the Euro-India Forum is part of the shared strategy to open the door of Indian Cities to Europe and beyond.

Indian cities leadership has up until now been missing in the process of shaping the international agenda of local authorities. The time is now ripe to involve Indian cities in this challenge.