1 February **Caring Systems Thinking Big**

Protecting our communities and enhancing their well-being is a must in the COVID-19 aftermath and this calls for transforming our systems and who is involved in decision- making. The relevance of care work shifted during the pandemic, including by considering the disproportionate impact on women and girls on their uses of time and their full participation in public life. Embracing equality in all parts of life is essential to transform our societies and develop a new way of doing politics, emphasizing the unique role of women and feminist local leaders and their transformative contribution to decision- making. To develop caring communities means understanding that priorities have changed and that we need to renew our social contract.

This Town Hall will bring to light the main elements of a caring society firstly going over the relationship between care and local public service provision. It will also cover the issue of human mobility and building communities that ensure all are cared for and protected. The issue of the future of work will also be key as changes in production and consumption are brought about.

**Welcome:** Emilia Sainz, UCLG Secretary-General

Described the Town Hall process which is their instrument to discuss with civil organizations are heard by their political leaders and in the policies that UCLG develops. It builds on the process that was used during the SDGs, Habitat III and of 2019 World Congress in Durban, South Africa. We want to ensure that your voices are feeding into our actions into policies that we are promoting. We are working with trusted partners who have been working with us. We have been discussing how the pandemic has effected our governments and Cities Are Listening Platform contains what we have been discussing. Noted what was addressed in prior Congress – gender equality, informality, etc. and now are proposing to look at complex notions that will be critical to transform our societies to reach sustainability and address governments in a new way. UCLG represents elected officials globally. You need to hold us accountable.

Concept of care – when world stopped in 2020 we saw how local and regional governments defined new ways to provide services. Inequalities was an important part of the problem in addressing some of global crises. SDGs are a solid and useful framework. We needed to look at other transformations towards leaving no one behind; caring for each other going from a service to a caring mentality. We need to give it content.

UCLG has been mandated to develop a new social contract based on SDGs; define our responsibilities and commitments with balance between current and future generations with a Pact for the Future – organized around care. What kind of new leadership? Feminist probably; new type of governance system.

Happy to include other partners. The sky is the limit; have bold proposals to build our collective effort.

Global Commons, Trust and Government, Climate and Culture are 3 other Town Halls

Fátima Fernández, UCLG Policy Team (focusing on migration)

1. Town Hall process came from events before the Durban World Hall and produced the Durban Declaration
2. It is part of the Cities Are Listening space
3. New features:

* Three cross cutting caucuses: youth, feminism, accessibility

1. Will deliver a policy document which will go through Policy Councils, committees and to the World Council of UCLG
2. Structure and topics of the 4 Town Halls
3. Will have representatives of the 3 caucuses
4. Timeline was laid out:

* Possible to hold meeting via UCLGMEETS Platform
* Hybrid retreat 21-25 February 1
* Deep dive visits hosted by some of UCLG members; smaller peer learning experiences that we will find a methodology for; will organize a session at the retreat to discuss this
* Drafting process – hold own meetings; can be supported by the Secretariat
* October 10-14 World Congress in Daejeon, Korea

**Lead organization: Cities Alliance** Greg Munro, Director

UCLG is part of this Alliance and have benefited from their work around informalities, slums, etc.

We focus on people living in urban poverty often left out in receiving services

Caring systems can be a difficult concept but:

1. Story by Margaret Mead who was asked by a student what was the first sign of civilization in a culture; Response: in ancient culture was a fiber that was broken and then rehealed. No animal survives a broken leg. Someone took time to bound up the wound; taken them to safety and took care of them. First sign was caring
2. We face unplanned urban growth; inadequate service provision; rise in insecurity that usually impact young girls and women and for those differently enabled with increased with violence.
3. We have learned that we are all in this together.
4. Systemic inequities have become much worse. How many were pushed back into poverty
5. How interdependent our economies are
6. Can look at this as a glass half full. We must take away an opportunity. Politicians need to renew social contract with citizens. Move from local government to local governance;
7. Need strengthen voice of civil society
8. Meaningful access to basic services
9. Need inclusivity and planning
10. Need to create a caring system of local governance
11. We need to hear from you and need concrete recommendations

Emilia: people need to renew their contract with others and with the planet.

**Ubuntu advisor** Jorge Pérez Jaramillo based in Medellin

This conversations must relate to past and future conversations.

SDGs, NUA and all of heritage we have in terms of work of cooperation and associations and the Our Common Agenda of the UNSG.

Caring Systems –

1. is very relevant to dealing with inequalities.
2. Need to reconquer cities as systems of caring.
3. Prioritize right; endow necessary public assets and be consistent.
4. Equality, equity and healthy for human life that is inclusive and accessible for everybody.
5. Innovations in the ways we build and relate to communities and in the culture of agreements based on solidarity and inclusion.
6. Focus on what is to be done; who is doing it and when
7. Urgent need for new kinds of political leadership options; need to make them aware of societies’ needs
8. Need to strengthen knowledge – get institutions and academic world must connect (research; local capabilities for innovation)
9. Living in times of tremendous skepticism and disappointment so need to put forward that need to go back to communities to develop trust and cooperation based on knowledge

Laid out what the UNSG has proposed including multilateralism.

Emilia: This system of care exists in our society but we are ignoring it as a public good and ignoring the collective good of care. We are not caring for the care providers (unpaid mostly women but those paid less in service care sector). We need move from economic growth defines development.

**Members:**

Rosa Pavanelli, Secretary General, Public Service International

Need to have a vision of the future keeping in mind our past

Care is:

1. mostly a female task;
2. if we want to need to start thinking that care is not just for women.
3. Need to open schools that are preparing caring people to include men; need to consider that caring is a shared obligation we have between gender and between family and the society.
4. We need to deal with financialization of care system e.g. elder care; services for disabled people
5. Need to consider that care is an important factor of the economy by counting how much care brings to the GDP of a community/country (It is a common economic factor)
6. We need to have an idea of care including what can be delivered to care of our community:

* Child, elderly, domestic help, transport, leisure services, nursing, adult, social services that can provide guidance for parents for youth, addressing addictions, shelters for victims of domestic violence or abuse, prisoner, public housing, employment services, waste collectors; recycling waste people; taking care of our environment

1. How can services be delivered?

* Alliances of citizens with local governments
* Responsibility of governments at all levels to deliver social services
* It is necessary for renewing trust with government and countering anti-system organizations that are growing; crucial for defending democracy
* Local government is the face of government for citizens;

1. Care is a human right and should be recognized as such
2. We issued a few months ago a manifesto calling for social and economic value of care; for equal pay for equal value; reduce unpaid care burden; eliminating sexual division of labor in the current idea of care; reclaiming public nature of services. <https://popshort.link/GlobalStudyonCare>

Gerald Leitner, Secretary General of international Federation of Library Associations IFLA representing libraries globally

Libraries are usually multifunctional. Each Town Hall has a library perspective.

What do caring systems mean for libraries:

1. Place human not the market at the center
2. Enforce rights of all to culture, information
3. SDGs principle of no one should be left behind but we know the harm of discrimination
4. Look to help all as far as possible to realize their potential; develop skills; know and enforce your rights
5. Need to find ways to set all for a better tomorrow
6. Not about just individuals but about communities; building connections and on the strengths of all
7. Digitalization brings benefits but may focus on individuals; need to support sharing cities

Library are:

1. principles is: Idea of to each reader, their book;
2. Not about providing a one way service; into hands of all
3. Be portals to drive a more inclusive, democratic approach; to work together

Future to deliver more caring systems:

1. Must adapt to people’s needs first
2. Looking at delivering policies drawing on current infrastructures
3. Need to be realistic about what this means to librarians and those working in public service; value and support training and ensure that our spaces and technologies are fit for purpose

Colin Rajah,Corodinator, Civil Society Action Committee

Largest platform of civil society engaging and acting on migration policy.

He was a migrant into the US as a domestic worker for large families while their parents were on holidays.

Caregivers:

1. So much is built around migrants, foreign born. In the US, 1 o 3 physicians are foreign born; higher percentage for nurses; domestic workers = vast majority.
2. We work on public systems and public services which is genderized; women of color from the global south. This trend was exposed during the pandemic. Their precarious situations showed much clearer what they faced – fast proportion of those infected with COVID were migrants who worked in the caring system and could not work from home and had to go to work. They had high rates of death
3. Some good practices – moratorium against visa deadlines but many contracts were cancelled; some were locked into abuse situations.

What was important: new solidarity that was emerging prior to the pandemic

1. Local authorities responding to migrants’ needs

* Firewall against immigration enforcement removing migrants’ fear
* Cities provided documents at municipal level when many did not have national identification

New social contract requires:

1. New solidarity between migrant associations, civil society movements and city authorities
2. Be a model for similar national action

**International Partner:** Gabriela Cuevas Barron UNHC 2030

1. How to rebuild public trust and exercise all human rights
2. Need of political leadership; governance is to have governments and citizens from civil society
3. Need political will
4. Inclusive processes
5. People at the center of all processes; engaging as equal partners; accessing experiences throughout healthcare systems
6. Understanding care as social protection network; universal healthcare coverage
7. We haven’t learned the lessons; highly unequal planet; debating vaccine equity still
8. Local government is the first step for redesigning a social contract; we need to start from our communities working with local government
9. Need solidarity
10. Vulnerability is a circumstance; it doesn’t define people; not seen as a lifelong but emergency policy; cannot condemn people to poverty
11. Whole of society healthcare focuses on communities and their health needs:

* ?
* Multisectoral;
* Empower people and communities

1. PPPs were designed for men but 70% were women
2. Governments alone cannot achieve healthcare for all; we need civil society, Parliament, etc. to be part of new social contract

Sri H Sofjan, Huairou Commission - Feminism

Huariou Commission is women led of grassroots in 43 countries that work collectively to transform and improve status of women, families and their communities.

Caring system is one of key points in Gender Equality Action Coalition which has a global alliance on care.

Almost all the speakers have brought up how care has always been seen as a woman’s work that needs to be changed to have a caring system

What is needed:

1. Law and policies
2. Service delivery
3. Changing norms – changing that care is a woman’s work via education and socialization
4. Financing – How do we finance care? Look at municipal and national budgets. Need to look at gender responsive budgeting as a tool
5. Data and accountability – working together

1. Gender based violence – people who work
2. Is our built environment inclusive
3. Empowering people

Greg Munro: his wife works in family court and they saw huge increase in domestic violence. Mentioned that gender budgeting will be included in the paper.

Victor Pineda, Founder and Director of World Enabled - Accessibility

Noted work of Federico who is helping UCLG see accessibility. World Enabled worked on the CRPD, SDGs and on the New Urban Agenda

1. What caring systems are and how should they structure:

* They are the fabric for a participatory and inclusive democratic local government.
* They have been radically commodified standard and respond to economic vulnerabilities.
* Inclusive welfare and guarantee equitable access to essential services for all by identifying and eliminating all barriers (1 in 7 who live in cities have a disability). 40% overlap of older persons have one.
* Take a human rights approach

1. Empowering care workers is important

* Accessibility is about agency of enhancement

1. How caring systems are about trust and governance and participatory caring process; need disaggregated data and leadership; do we have migrants and PwD in healthcare systems?

* During pandemic we launched a virtual group and learned what was happening around the world; e.g. India locked down essential workers leaving those who needed them without any resources
* Global Compact on Inclusive and Accessible Cities was launched with 6 key principles

1. Need culturally sensitive caring systems with capacity to innovate and provide a comprehensive approach

Greg Munro: need to include the differently enabled included and importance of data

Elana Wong, Migrant Youth and Migration Platform part of the Youth Caucus

Conducts capacity building

Importance of change happens at the local level

We took a whole of society approach that build and support equitable societies that works to deal with injustice with caring systems;

Need inclusive design throughout all that creates a caring and dignified life

Pandemic exposed vulnerable who suffered from a broken social contract

Main trends: urgent gaps including mental health support; education; humane housing; food and water were not accessible to many.

* Youth suffered from lack of access to digital technology; to health care; from labor exploitation; trafficking;

Many are left behind

* Lost employment due to lockdowns
* Civil society has stepped in where government systems failed but lack funding and scaling to reach vulnerable people
* Need for documentation

What is needed:

* We need funding
* Implement systems that are co-designed by those who are vulnerable and are compensated for their time
* Intersectionality needs to be acknowledged
* Support those who helped during the crisis
* “I am because we are”

Greg: we think about migrants and youth but not put them together. Prime Minister asked if there could be help incorporate integrating migrant youth into the economy as they have so much to offer.

**Gold VI Report** Camila Cociña. https://gold.uclg.org/reports/gold-vi

Next report will be launched this October that will provide summary from civil society, UCLG community and research.

1. Shift from service provision to governments that care
2. Pathways to urban equality is a series of actions local governments can take: collective understanding; connecting; etc. includes a pathway on caring.

Olga Segovia:

1. Considering care as a main function for life which has been invisibilized
2. Demands for more sustainable inclusive societies where local authorities have a key role breaking up gender division of work
3. Recognize rights of caregivers and care takers
4. Care needs to acknowledge production of vast majority of care provided at home and by NGOs
5. Caring systems must be placed in public conversation
6. Must include social protection to those who give unpaid care giving
7. Needs leadership of local and regional governments

Daria Cibrario: PSI is contributing to the GOLD VI Process. Working paper “Enabling access to quality local public services for all” : <https://bit.ly/3gfu4VT>

**Next steps:**

We can have another meeting or you can email your ideas: [townhall@uclg.org](mailto:townhall@uclg.org)

Flexibility in this process. Cities Alliance will ask our civil society members for their input and encourages others to do the same.

Gisela Chala, Vice mayor of Quito: Our responsibility of caring for us and for the planet cannot be relegated. We must raise natural risks like the disaster she is dealing with right now. Fundamental to build cities of living well and create a new social contract to eradicate gender violence. As women in these spaces we need to wipe out political violence that are giving less importance to caring and gender violence.

Emilia: Thanked all. Pragmatic recommendations. We are proposing a true shift of priorities in policy making, in political will, in political leadership. At the retreat there will be a joint Town Halls and seeing commonalities and hearing full discussion on path towards equality which is at the center of our research; and hopefully connect dots that require deeper thinking and acting.

UCLGMEETS will be active tomorrow or day after. Welcomes having others joining e.g. Slum Dwellers International and WIEGO.

We have colleagues of GlobalCAT putting together key messages of Town Hall meetings that will be posted on UCLGMEETS. Katherine Kline’s notes will be made available.