25 January 2022 **Trust and Government – Thinking Big Meeting Town Hall Process 2022**

**Objective**

The first meeting with all members of the Trust and Government Town Hall will aim at getting to the heart of the issue and its main challenges through a substantive discussion on the matter. The meeting will also provide an opportunity to bring each other up to speed and agree on expectations and hopes for the Town Hall.

15:30 – 15:40 **Welcome and introduction:** Emilia Saiz

What the Town Hall framework process is:

1. Structural dialogue that built on legacy of dialogue with civil society partners and others during the SDG and Habitat III process
2. Many of our messages were stronger if we worked with other stakeholders aligned with them
3. They helped us develop position papers which we took into our work plan
4. It was a success in 2019 Durban Congress and allowed us to create a robust community and proven to be really precious now during the pandemic.
5. Finding balance between current and future needs
6. Need deep transformation to have sustainability to be about quality of life and local and regional governments to safe guard dreams of communities with a new social contract

defined along with SDGs are valid as a framework along with other global agreements

New Global Contract

1. Defining the commons for service provision
2. Addressing climate emergency and role of culture
3. Shifting from service provision to care
4. We represent over 250,000 members and need to address issue of trust; link between government and governance with co-creation

Partners:

1. General Assembly of Partners has gone through Habitat III, defining the New Urban Agenda and defining our role; diverse group will be working with us hand in hand; will push us and hold us accountable
2. We are counting on partners to bring to table issues not so easy; new aspect=

**Process:** Pablo, chief of UCLG staff and focal point of this process

1. Town Hall is one of 4 that UCLG has. Global Commons, Trust & Government; Climate and Culture; Caring
2. Aim: Pact to the future and future agenda of the UN in the Common Agenda of the UNSG
3. Cities are Listening Strategy
4. Town Halls
* Has youth, feminist, youth, accessibility caucuses who will produce a stand alone document
* Co-creation process including field visits, online discussion leading to specific policy papers with recommendations; policy councils, commissions and World Council; will be offered for adoption
* International partners for each Town Hall; UN-Habitat for Trust & Government
* Most partners represent international recognized constituencies
* Each town Hall will organize itself
* Thinking Big meeting
* Retreat (hybrid)
* Deep dive visits to meet each other and to meet UCLG members doing their jobs
* Co-creation online process
* Have informal meetings and to invite anyone who should be added to discussions

Emilia:

It is a co-creation process. We offer a framework. There will be an interactive space to exchange documents and have conversations via UCLG Meets or in your own mechanisms. Your reflections and recommendations will reach our political leadership and enter into our work plan (expect).

Eugenie Birch, GAP President:

We support and are excited about opportunity to continue to work with UCLG. We see this as the next important step how we can work for Trust in Government. This process is able to incorporate lessons learned. GAP = 17 PCGs with an interest in sustainable urban development. Many GAP members are here. Topic is so important for societal well being.

Why is trust important?

For day to day governing

For making needed changes eg. Public health; climate change; inequality; public finance and promoting public prosperity

Drivers of trust:

1. Competence of government based on responsiveness and reliability
2. Values integrity of openness and fairness
3. Government is many things: elected officials; civil servants;
4. Differences among of citizenry: age, urban/rural; regional; gender; race; ethnicity; education; income, etc.

What causes mistrust?

1. Financial insecurity
2. Social disintegration
3. Contextual situation e.g. scandals
4. Misinformation

What we have learned that enable trust:

1. Public participation with a belief and understanding of the problem we are facing
2. When trusted experts were brought into the discussion
3. High ethical standards so that all transactions are believable and credible

Partners

So excited to have them involved

Thanked UCLG for creating this wonderful opportunity and exciting challenge

Emilia:

Yesterday in Town Hall on Commons had former director of Cities Alliance who spoke about talking about commons, we need to think about our role to defend the political space where truth could flourish and be part of governance.

Philipp Rode, London School of Economics with other partners to gather information on how governance is effected by pandemic emergency and with complex emergencies (long and routine ones and are not one off) and its impact on local governance. Requires trust in governance or to trust those in the street to remind us that something is going wrong.

1. Emergencies require immediate response with consensus building
2. Why cities and governance matters?
* What is the contribution of municipal governance to add to value definition and exchange? Cities are spaces for deliberation; interactive engagement; appreciating the evidence and learning from other cities on new approaches to deliberation to address polarization and lack of trust; tension between efficiency of government and democracy
* Large cosmopolitan cities are influential beyond their boundaries; perceived as soft powers
* Delivery positive change and outcomes requires beyond tested solutions and embrace experiments at large scale which cities are good at to identify future pathways
1. Working with our partners, teasing some emerging principles (10)
* Human rights and social justice at the center
* Exploring new forms of democratic legitimacy requiring new forms of deliberation not just participation e.g. citizen juries
* Command and control structures don’t cut it; a more feminist approach via governance by empathy with real connection with citizens
* Work with trusted institutions; how we engage with truth and how to bring about social proof that people do not see
* Respond properly results without the emergency that people don’t see

Emilia: important to find new legitimacy; sees his thoughts being replicated in UCLG. Need to see how to represent future generations in our governance structure.

**Some key thoughts:** Maria Fernanda Espinosa**,** advisor of many global initiatives e.g. Gender Equality; President of 73rd UNGA

1. Noted the structure of the Town Halls which represent the defining issues as we imagine and shape renewed forms of governance.
2. Local authorities are dealing with a time of emergencies; interconnected crisises; an ecological collapse impacting daily lives of citizens. Officials face the disenchantment of their citizens – when lose jobs; lack of safety nets; millions have to flee due to climate issues or a conflict
3. Subsidiarity works to voice dissatisfaction; study shows that government leaders and journalists are least trusted and that people think that future in 5 years will be worse.
4. Latin America is region AIDB Report trusts governments, democratic institutions less and has highest inequalities which are inter related. Governments are trusted by 27%; Parliaments 20%; Political parties by 13%.

How to build new social contract and how to shape the new pact for the future

1. It is about power and agency. How to build social structures for transparency at all scales including reformed UN

Headlines for discussion:

1. George Orwell telling the truth becomes a revolutionary act
* Words matter; what we say matters; do as you do and say what you can do.
* Critical role of media and social media – free speech should be accountable
1. More citizenship with a new social contract – intergenerational and feminist leadership shared power
2. Allow for new experiments in local participatory democracy; challenging the new social order; informing global trust building
3. Restoring trust should be at the center of building back better and be explicit policy; includes multi scale effort from community to international spaces

No time for incremental change. Indifference is not an option.

<https://gold.uclg.org/site/default/files/pb02_v11.pdf>

PSI paper Public Services 2.0: Democratic Governance and participation in Local Public Services

<https://uploads.eventdrive.com/events/13054/bonuslist/7544/lrgnext2021-brief-6-public-services-20-democratic-governance-en.sooBzWPd.pdf>

<https://www.citiesarelistening.uclg.org>

**Introductions and answers to the following question: Why is it relevant to talk about trust and government in the current international context? What are the major trends that characterize this topic?**

**Facilitated:** General Assembly of Partners

Rudi Borrmann, Lead, OGP Local, Open Government Partnership

Noted that their evidence reflects what has been said today. Citizen participation needs to be seen as a skilled building opportunity. Local governments can bring real world problems to the table. <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/ogp-at-ten-toward-democratic-renewal/>

Viviane Ogou, Barcelona Youth Council:

Youth caucus has debated what to bring today in response to 2 questions:

1. Relevant in trust in government – challenging and inspiring context; rights of authoritariism and increased violence; local governments are key to protect well being of citizens; living through rapid changing world happening at real as well as digital worlds. Growing tensions can result from digital transformation.
2. Trends – antagonist processes exist. Forth way of authoritism and corruption; historical inequalities and exclusion while seeing organizations and governments are pushing for gender, race, age inclusion creating new opportunities. Young people are demanding more inclusion in governance everywhere. We want local government leaders to act as role models
3. Living in a world difficult to understand. Citizens may think why should I trust when it seems so many dangers exist. We need citizens and governments to join together to invest in global co-creation efforts for a new social contract.

Genie: we depend on youth to bring this along.

Barbara Holtmann, Fixed Africa

**What it Looks Like When It is Fixed** is a methodology for multi effort including all people within a municipality. We have learned during the pandemic, that almost all are living with fear, grief, loss and faced with unresolvable crises. For municipalities to be good partners, how do they offer themselves as good partner with stakeholders. We must first look at what they are facing and look at their resilience among ours. Durban is dealing with homelessness during 3 weeks of rain for example. How we personalize people’s relationship with the environment so that they think differently about city waste dumping for example. Issues of transport that makes women unreliable when it is unreliable. Require deep commitment to building partnerships. COVID has also taught us that we cannot move from crisis to crisis and try to leave behind existing and pre-existing crises.

Genie Birch: theme of need for empathy.

Chris Williams, UN Habitat, NY Office

Noted Maria Fernanda Espinosa as former UNGA president and wondered about her working with current PGA who has been asked to respond to UNSG’s Our Common Agenda that speaks to trust; exercise of authority; accountability; planetary ecosystem;

Global Task Force on Local and Regional Government has been invited to respond to one of the 5 elements.

Concept of social contract as envisioned by *Our Common Agenda* https:/www.un.org/en/un75/common-agenda.

1. Role of local government where revolutionary changes in working happen;
2. Warrants a dedicated discussion

**SG has established UN Task Force on Future of Cities**

What are mechanisms to allow local governments to participate more in the multilateral system to make multilateralism more effective

Chaired by UN-Habitat Executive Director

Influenced Our Common Agenda e.g. advisory group of local and regional government representatives

Emilia and Chris are developing TORs to allow the SG a reference point for the Advisory Group

**UNPG 28 April High Level Meeting on implementation of the New Urban Agenda**

Question of local governments; implementing the NUA is important and the UNPGA has established an advisory group to focus on this concern

Genie Birch: *Our Common Agenda* has 12 areas with #6 Build Trust

Alberto Fernandez Gibaja, Senior Programme Officer, International IDEA

Research and data on how democracies are working shows:

1. Crisis of the social contract exists today anchored in many issues including general feeling of incapacity of democracies to deliver.
2. A crisis of relationship of citizens and institutions. Representative institutions are not acting as the transmission belt; are not trusted by citizens which breaks fundamental part of democracy. Linked to authoritarian regimes who are becoming more vocal and capable of influencing outside of their sphere of influence. It will concentrate power; take away power from local governments; implies that government is not shared crippling capacity of cities to act.
3. Social communication – problem of the media leading towards radicalization; problem when a part of society agrees not to play by rules of democracy than democracy cannot function.

Need citizens to be connected with governments that they trust.

Genie Birch: reminds us of cities are innovative places.

Sri H. Sofjan, Huairou Commission, Representative of the Feminist Caucus

Huairou Commission is women led social movement working collectively for transformative change globally.

Trust and government is key; accountability; transparency; efficiency; effectiveness; participation. What she has not heard is Rule of Law which is important as trust is eroded if Rule of Law is not practiced. Huairou has a tool in building trust: Local to Local Dialogue when working with governments, authorities. Need equality be included in our social contract.

We look forward to working with all Town Halls to ensure that feminist principles are integrated and become the transformative principles. We will bring other feminist leaders that we work with. <https://huairou.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/L2L-Manual-for-web.pdf>

Victor Pineda, World Enabled, Representative of the Accessibility Caucus

Trust is the fundamental threat that holds the fabric of society together.

Fundamental realities:

Normative approach to design, public policies, governance systems that have historically left many out; need to leave no one behind. Accessibility goes far beyond ramps and elevators; it is a fundamental cross cutting issue that gets to root of democracy – do you have a chance to be heard? All initiatives can create barriers or facilitators to participation. Accessibility must include elimination of social, physical and institutional barriers. We are talking about agency and design for those on the margins to ensure their human rights supported. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Includes ways we create digital meetings.

<https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/inclusive_accessible_cities_policypaper.pdf>

French speaking mayor: no one should be left aside and right to identity. In Africa more than 100 million do not have an official identity nor a legal existence. We would like to see this included in UCLG’s work. We want to reach out to young people to provide them with identity documentation.

Genie Birch: acknowledged that we must address this issue.

**Open Floor**

Tom Dallessio: How do we establish guard rails on conversation of trust. If we provide platforms for unsubstantiated conversations how do we protect misinformation or dangerous one? What about dealing with public officials who espouse dangerous ideas? How do we recognize who to trust?

Katherine Kline: emphasized the key is dealing with unlocking power of corrupt country leaders and also reminded all that issues of urban ageing is included in the Accessibility caucus as it was in the Inclusive and Accessible Cities 2019 Town Hall policy paper. <https://gold.uclg.org.reports/gold-vi>

Camila Cocina: Next Gold Six Report focusing on pathways to urban and regional governments can take to advance equality which is central. Trust overlaps with everything especially pathway of democratizing. We have been working with civil society organizations documenting research to create concrete tools. We will publishing series of reports next month with the final report in October.

Insights:

1. Compositive vision in capabilities to promote broad local partnerships more than participation but requires democratic innovations; families of practice.
2. How local and regional governments can support capacities of less recognized groups with power that is shared.

Victor Pineda: This is a very interconnected process. Recognized the leadership of Kathy Kline representing older persons. Accessibility covers many different people including migrants entering cities.

17:15 – 17:30 **Way forward and next steps**

**Working title: A New Social Contract: Unlocking Trust Among Governments and People**

**Draft Outline:**

1. Introduction (brief history and theories of the idea of a social contract)
2. Principles for a New Social Contract
3. Review of Current Practices
4. Exploring: Innovative Practices
5. Implementation/Solutions Going Forward

**How will we work together?**

February 25th need for a zero draft. The four partners need to form their own internal working and then have an executive committee with responsibility of reaching out to ensure that voices of all are heard.

Platforms – WhatsApp is available.

Invited Maria Fernanda Espinosa to be advisor to this group.

Structure to have open conversations

Set up a google doc for interaction with drafts

Open to other suggestions for this process.

Emilia: others can be involved in this process. We need to be open and provocative and to address Tom Dallessio’s questions and concerns. We might need a specific session on media as it is coming up in other Town Halls. We will look for common issues to all Town Halls that would benefit from a joint discussion.

Ma Augusta Larco, Quito, Ecuador

Greetings from the mayor. A main issue has to do with increase in racism; address universal citizenship with solidarity, trust and empathy.

**Closing:** Emilia Sainz: Very good beginning today. UCLG is the enabler of the Global Task Force and are trying to ensure that voices representing local and regional governments are heard and are part of the processes. Important meeting tomorrow on how to shape the UNSG’s proposed Advisory Group. Need to address hard topics like corruption; moving from participation to deliberation. You are the right people to do this with our political leadership and the councils. Don’t hesitate to bring appropriate others to the table.

Maria Fernanda Espinosa: Discussion has been so rich. Take away is the importance of trust building between citizens and governments and among themselves. Must be part of Building Back Better process. Trust building must be at the center of our efforts in revitalizing our democracies. We have check lists of core set of values. Rich discussion. Thanked Chris Williams for including the path of Our Common Agenda, intergovernmental spaces that UCLG is participating in.

Genie Birch: Onward. Has collected all documents into a folder.