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Local and Global

The Role of Local Government in a Sustainable World

Paikallishallinnon rooli globalisoituvassa maailmassa

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Preface

One of the numerous consequences of globalisation is the growing interdependence of the local and the global: even if at first sight they seem remote from one another and at times pulling in opposite directions, there are many shared interests, and much greater effort must be made to encourage the various levels to act cohesively and cooperatively. Some of the worst problems that we face – lack of access to fresh water and clean energy, lack of decent work, erosion of urban and rural communities alike, famine and lack of security – are both global and local. And if we are to solve them, we need coherent plans and action at all levels. One key challenge is to close the gaps between the differences in the way things are perceived. For example, the lack of agreed language when speaking about Civil Society and participation may seem a minor detail at first sight, but it underlies many fundamental differences of opinion. This report tries to clarify some of these issues, and to open the way to greater understanding of their importance.

This discussion paper has been commissioned by the Department for Development Policy of the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs. It has been financed by the Ministry's funds for study developing countries. The thoughts and conclusions of the paper are solely my own and represent in no way the opinions of the Ministry. The text is based on material that I've been able to collect while being the Chairperson of the local government association ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, for the triennial term 2000–2003. During this time period, among other events, the global local government community prepared itself for and participated in the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), and

in the Local Government Session (LGS) in Johannesburg. The preparatory process was coordinated and the LGS organised by ICLEI.

ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability (formerly the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives) is a worldwide association of local governments dedicated to implementing sustainable development. It is governed by its 450 member cities, towns and counties and municipal associations. ICLEI runs campaigns and programmes, functions as the international sustainable development agency for local governments and carries out advocacy vis-à-vis national governments and UN organizations. The ICLEI World Secretariat is located in Toronto, Canada, but it maintains regional secretariats for Africa, Europe and Latin America; sub-regional and country offices in Australia/ New Zealand, Canada, Japan, Korea, the Philippines and the USA, along with project offices in India, Indonesia, Mexico and Thailand.

My chairmanship of ICLEI would not have been possible without the substantial support from the City of Helsinki, and the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Accordingly, I would like to express here my heartfelt and respectful gratitude.

Helsinki, 20 December 2003

Kaarin Taipale

Esipuhe

Yksi maapalloistumisen monista seurausvaikutuksista on paikallisen ja globaalin kohtalonyhteys: näennäistä vastakkaisuutta ja etäisyyttä tärkeämpää on niiden samanaikaisuus ja rinnakkaisuus. Vaikeimmat ongelmat – pula puhtaasta juomavedestä ja energiasta, työttömyys, kaupunkien ja maaseudun slummiutuminen, turvattomuus ja nälkä – ovat sekä maailmanlaajuisia että paikallisia. Myös niiden ratkaisut vaativat suunnittelua ja toimintaa kaikilla tasoilla. Yksinkertaiselta vaikuttavan yhtälön sisällä on kuitenkin monia umpisolmuja, joista tämä selvitys pyrkii avaamaan joitakin. Esimerkiksi kansalaisyhteiskunnasta ja osallistumisesta puhuttaessa käytettävän käsitteistön sekavuus voi tuntua sivuseikalta, mutta peittää kuitenkin alleen periaatteellisia ristiriitaisuuksia.

Raportin on tilannut Suomen ulkoasiainministeriön kehityspoliittinen osasto ja työtä on rahoitettu ulkoasiainministeriön kehityσμαatutkimuksen määrärahoista. Tässä esitetyt ajatukset ovat kokonaan omiani eivätkä edusta ulkoasiainministeriön näkemyksiä. Teksti perustuu aineistoon, jota olen kerännyt toimiessani ICLEIn – Local Governments for Sustainability –järjestön puheenjohtajana kolmivuotiskauden 2000–2003. Tähän ajanjaksoon sisältyi mm. paikallishallinnon koko maailman kattavan kentän valmistautuminen ja osallistuminen syksyn 2002 kestäväen kehityksen huippukokoukseen Johannesburgissa (WSSD) ja ICLEIn siellä järjestämä nelipäiväinen rinnakkaistapahtuma Local Government Session.

ICLEI on vuonna 1990 perustettu kunta-alan maailmanjärjestö, jonka jäsenet haluavat toteuttaa kestäväen kehitystä. ICLEIssä käyttävät äänivaltaa sen 450

jäsenkaupunkia, -maakuntaa ja -kuntaliittoa. ICLEI organisoii kampanjoita ja toimintaohjelmia, toimii paikallishallinnon maailmanlaajuisena kestäväen kehityksen erityisjärjestönä ja ajaa paikallishallinnon asiaa YK-järjestöissä ja kansallisvaltioiden hallituksissa. ICLEIillä on päätoimipaikka Torontossa Kanadassa, maanosakohtaiset toimistot Afrikassa, Euroopassa ja Latalalaisessa Amerikassa, alue- ja maakohtaiset toimipaikat Australiassa (kattaa myös Uuden Seelannin), Filippiineillä, Japanissa, Kanadassa, Koreassa ja USA:ssa sekä projektitoimistot Intiassa, Meksikossa ja Thaimaassa.

En olisi voinut olla ICLEIn puheenjohtaja ilman Helsingin kaupungin ja Suomen ulkoasiainministeriön vahvaa tukea, josta kunnioittavat kiitokset.

Helsingissä 20.12.2003

Kaarin Taipale

Summary in Finnish: Paikallishallinnon rooli globalisoituvassa maailmassa – kysymyksiä ja johtopäätöksiä

Kauppakassin avaaminen on hyvä oppitunti globalisaation arkeen, maapalloistumisen vaikutukset ulottuvat yksilöön asti joka päivä. Paikallistaso leijuu jossakin yksilön, kansallisvaltion ja globaalitason välimaastossa, eikä sen paikkaa ja laajuutta tunnu olevan sen helpompi hahmottaa kuin maapalloistumistakaan. Entä puhutaanko paikallisuudesta, paikallisyhteisöistä, paikallisviranomaisista, paikallishallinnosta – vai saman tien kaupungeista? Millaisin sitein paikallistaso kiinnittyy yhtäältä yksilöön ja toisaalta globaalihallintoon? *Miten globalisaatio näkyy ja tuntuu paikallistasolla kautta maailman?*

Rion ja Johannesburgin seurantaprosessi päätettiin keväällä 2003 jakaa kaksivuotisiin temaattisiin sykleihin, joista toinen tarkastelee aihealueella, esimerkiksi vesihuollossa toteutettuja esimerkkejä (implementation), toinen muotoilee toimintapolitiikkaa (policy). Hallitusten ulkopuolisille tahoille – kansalaisyhteiskunnalle laajasti ymmärrettynä – osoitettiin tekijän paikkaa, ja sen odotettiin istuvan hiljaa joka toinen vuosi, kun puhutaan politiikasta. Nämä kaksi näkökulmaa – politiikka ja sen toteutus – ovat käyttökelpoisia myös, kun analysoidaan paikallishallinnon roolia kestäväen kehityksen globaalihallinnossa. *Ovatko kaupungit hyviä työmuurahaisia vai kannattaako ne ottaa mukaan myös ohjelmien laadintaan? Miten edistetään paikallistason toteutustyötä ja miten rakennetaan vuoropuhelua toteutuksen keinoista ja toimintaedellytyksistä?*

Osallistumisen tai osallisuuden käsite sisältää ajatuksen, että neuvotteluhuoneisiin tuodaan uusia tuoleja, ellei aivan pöydän ääreen niin seinän vierelle kuitenkin. Mutta kuka osallistuu, ketä edustaa, ja millä valtakirjalla? Ketkä piiloutuvat kansalaisyhteiskunnan (civil society) tai kansalaisjärjestöjen (NGOs) kylttien taakse? Mihin porukkaan kuuluvat kaupungit, ovatko ne vapaaehtoista järjestötoimintaa? Edustavatko suorilla vaaleilla valitut kaupunginjohtajat ja kunnanvaltuutetut kansalaisyhteiskuntaa samalla, kun pysyvät virkamiehet istuvat hallitusten nimikylttien takana? *Missä kulkevat edustuksellisen demokratian, hallinnon ja vapaan kansalaistoiminnan rajat? Päästäänkö osallistumismekanismeja kehittämään ennen kuin on päästy yhteisymmärrykseen siitä, mikä on 'kansalaisyhteiskunta'?* Näitä kysymyksiä ja sekavaa käsitteistöä pohditaan parhaillaan eri foorumeilla, niin lähiöiden asukasilloissa kuin YK:ssa. Taustalla on tietenkin nopea muutos, jolla ylikansalliset uutiskanavat, muut joukkotiedotusvälineet ja internet ovat muuttaneet sekä julkishallintoa että talouselämää aikaisempaa läpinäkyvämmiksi. Samalla ne ovat houkutelleet kutsumattomia vieraita kokouskabinettien ovien taakse vaatimaan lisää tietoa ja oikeutta saada äänensä kuuluiksi. Toisten keinot ovat radikaalimpia, toiset – kuten paikallishallinto – eivät ole heitelleet ikkunoihin katukiviä, mutta eivät sitten ole päässeet otsikoihinkaan.

Edellä hahmotellut avainkäsiteparit – globaali ja paikallinen, politiikan määrittely ja sen toteutus, sekä osallistuminen ja päätöksentekojärjestelmä – ovat tämän raportin kehyksenä. Sisällöllinen tavoite on tarkastelukulmasta riippumatta sama: miten kehityksestä saadaan kestävää? Mitä keinoja paikallishallinnolla on

käytettävissä ja miten niitä voidaan tukea? Onko problematiikassa suuriakaan eroja, oltiin sitten teollisuus- tai kehitysmaassa? Onko Suomessa hyviä käytäntöjä, joita voitaisiin soveltaa muualla?

Globaali ja paikallinen

Tuotantoprosessit, rahavirrat tai saasteet eivät tunnusta valtakunnanrajoja. Metropolialueet ovat sekä kansallisen että maailmantalouden moottoreita. Helsinkiläisessä yliopiston tai yksityisen yhtiön tutkimuslaitoksessa tehty innovaatio voi vaikuttaa huomisaamun lukuihin New Yorkin pörssissä. Lontolaisessa pankissa tehty päätös voi siirtää tuhansia työpaikkoja Mumbaihin. Maailman kauppajärjestön säännös saattaa vaikuttaa siihen, miten Oulun kaupunki voi järjestää julkisen liikenteensä tai joutuuko intialainen pientilallinen muuttamaan maalta kaupunkiin. Maailmanpankissa tehty investointipäätös määrittää, miten afrikkalainen suurkaupunki järjestää vesihuoltonsa. Toisaalta, australialainen kaupunki voi päättää sitoutua Kioton ilmastotavoitteisiin, vaikkei maan hallitus ole allekirjoittanut protokollaa. Kaupunki voi päättää, että sen hallinnoimilla varoilla ostetaan pelkästään tuotteita ja palveluita, jotka täyttävät kestävä tuotannon ja kulutuksen ehdot, vaikkei hallituksen ohjelmasta vielä olisi kirjoitettu riviäkään.

Politiikan määrittely ja sen toteutus

Joukko kaupunkeja on siis ottanut aloitteen kestävän kehityksen toteuttamisesta omiin käsiinsä. Ne testaavat menetelmiä, joilla globaaleja tavoitteita toteutetaan paikallisin toimin. Paikallisagendaprosessi – Agenda 21:n paikallinen tulkinta – painottaa yhteiskunnan eri osapuolten ottamista mukaan kehittämistavoitteiden ja keinojen määrittelyyn. Ilmastokampanjassa kaupungit mm. säästävät energiaa ja siitä aiheutuvia kustannuksia, sijoittavat uusiutuviin energiamuotoihin ja parantavat kaupunkielämän ja hengitysilman laatua kehittämällä julkista liikennettä. On syntynyt kaupunkien kansainvälinen verkosto, jonka jäsenet yhdessä toteuttavat kestävä hankintapolitiikkaa. Teollisuudellekin kymmenien kaupunkien ryhmä on asiakkaana sekä suurempi haaste että houkuttelevampi porkkana kuin kylä kerrallaan.

Tällaiseen kehittämistyöhön ei voi lähteä aivan tyhjin käsin. Edellytyksenä on esimerkiksi, että paikallishallinto toimii tehokkaasti, sille on kansallisessa lainsäädännössä annettu selkeät pelisäännöt ja mahdollisuus itsenäiseen taloudenpitoon, esimerkiksi verotusoikeus. Ilman verotusoikeutta ja kustannustietoisuutta kaupungin on vaikea hakea omaa rahoitusta investoinneilleen, ja se jää velka-anomuksineen joko maailmanmarkkinoilla määräytyvien pankkikorkojen tai keskushallinnon hyväntahtoisuuden varaan. Hallinto tarvitsee osaavia virkamiehiä, valistuneita luottamusmiehiä ja tietojärjestelmiä, jotka lisäävät byrokratian läpinäkyvyyttä. Kaupunkien on myös voitava vaihtaa kokemuksia ja oppia toisiltaan, ettei jokaisen tarvitse raivata tietään yksin. Paikallishallinnon

järjestöilläkin on tässä paljon tehtävää niin kansallisella kuin globaalitasolla.

Jos kunnallisvaltuutetut ovat tehneet päätöksen kehityksen suuntaamisesta kestäväksi, strategian toteuttamista ei pidä marginalisoida ympäristötoimen tehtäväksi vaan se on todella vietävä läpi kaikkien hallinnon sektoreiden. Investoinneista ei tule kestäviä, elleivät myös teknisen puolen päälliköt ja rahoitusjohtajat ymmärrä, mistä kestävyudessa on kysymys. Tämä tulee erityisen selvästi esille, kun puhutaan suurista satsauksista ja jatkuvaan ylläpitoa vaativista peruspalveluista kuten energia- ja vesihuollosta, liikennejärjestelmistä ja ylipäänsä rakentamisesta. Keskus- ja paikallishallinnolle asetettavat vaatimukset eivät tässä suhteessa poikkea mitenkään toisistaan.

Kaupungeissa siis tehdään – ja kuuluu tehdä – pitkälle tulevaisuuteen vaikuttavia, käytännön toteutukseen johtavia päätöksiä, jos siihen vain on lainsäädännön, osaamisen ja rahoituksen raamit. On kuitenkin selvää, että paikallistason strategioiden on nivouduttava kansallisiin tavoitteisiin, muuten eivät kummatkaan toteudu. Siksi politiikan määrittelyä ja toteutusta ei voi erottaa toisistaan, tapahtuvat ne millä tasolla hyvänsä, kaupungintalolla, Esplanadin eteläreunalla Smolnassa, Brysselissä, New Yorkissa tai Cancunissa.

Päätöksentekojärjestelmät ja osallistuminen

On poliittisesti korrektaa puhua osallistumisesta, mutta siihen yksimielisyys usein loppuukin. Jo pelkästään käsitteistö, jolla kuvataan kansalaisyhteiskuntaa tai paikallistasoa, on täynnä ristiriitoja ja väärinkäsityksiä.

YK:n pääsihteerin nimittämä, Brasilian entisen presidentin johtama ja hänen nimeään kantava Cardoso-työryhmä pohtii parhaillaan kansalaisyhteiskunnan roolia YK-järjestelmässä. On kiintoisaa nähdä, millaisia suosituksia paneeli antaa. On vaikea kuvitella, että 2000-luvulla pidettäisiin yhä yllä globaalia päätöksentekojärjestelmää, jossa hallitusten ulkopuolisilla tahoilla olisi vain statistin osa. Jos globaaliyhteiskunnan kaikki tahot halutaan sitouttaa toteuttamaan yhteisiä tavoitteita, ne on kutsuttava jo neuvottelupöytään rakentamaan strategiat yhteistuumiin. Paikallishallinnolla on päivittäinen kosketus arkitodellisuuteen, siksi sillä voisi olla myös globaaleissa kehittämiskeskusteluissa aivan erityinen rooli. Paikallistason toimintamahdollisuudet ovat liki rajattomat – mikäli sillä on kansallisessa lainsäädännössä määritellyt valtuudet, valistuneet päättäjät ja osaava virkakunta.

Paikallishallinnon on tietysti lunastettava äänivaltansa olemalla itse osallistava. Kaupunkien kannalta ehkä syvällekäyvin johtopäätös on, että ne voivat vaatia saada äänensä kuuluviin vain, jos ne itse omassa päätöksenteossaan, niin poliittisella kuin virkamiespuolella, ovat avoimia kuulemaan kansalaisyhteiskunnan eri osapuolten kantoja – eikä vain kuulemaan viime hetkellä muodon vuoksi vaan ottamaan

näkemykset valmistelussa aidosti huomioon. Jokainen, joka on kunnallisvirkamiehenä istunut asukasillassa tai vastannut kaupunkilaisen ärtyneeseen puhelinsoittoon, tietää miten vaikeaa kuuleminen on. Mutta jokainen virkamies, joka itse on joutunut organisaatiouudistuksen riepottelemaksi ilman että on voinut osallistua kehittämisprosessiin, tietää turhautumisen tunteen ja muistaa motivaation lamautumisen. Kuulemiseen tarvitaan sekä hyviä käytäntöjä että lainsäädännön ohjeita – kuten esimerkiksi suomalaisessa maankäytön ja rakentamisen lainsäädännössä.

Globaalitasolla YK:n kestävän kehityksen komission (CSD) vetämä Rio+10, Johannesburgin huippukokouksen valmisteluprosessi lienee ollut osallistavuudessaan ja avoimuudessaan aivan omaa luokkaansa – maailman kauppajärjestö WTO:n ääri vastakohta. Kaikkia päätoimijatahoja (major groups) pyydettiin hyvissä ajoin nimeämään edustajansa, joille annettiin tehtäväksi koordinoida oman taustaryhmänsä näkemykset. Mitä lähemmäs Johannesburgia tultiin, sitä selvemmin kansalaisyhteiskunnan puheenvuorot nivoutuivat osaksi hallitustenvälistä keskustelua. On tärkeää muistaa, että kansalaisyhteiskunnalla ei voi keskustelua käytäessä olla yhtä yhteistä mielipidettä, sen enempää kuin hallituksilla. Erään YK-järjestön käytäntö, jonka mukaan hallintoneuvoston kokouksen puheenjohtaja voi *halutessaan* antaa *yhden* kommenttipuheenvuoron *yhdelle kansalaisyhteiskunnan edustajalle*, on suorastaan loukkaava menettely, jolla kansalaisyhteiskunnan ääni tehdään naurunalaiseksi.

Kansalaisyhteiskunnan eri osapuolia kuvaavasta käsitteistöstä on päästävä yhteisymmärrykseen. Päätöksentekoprosesseja ja hallintorakenteita ei voida kehittää, ellei ymmärretä, keitä osapuolet ovat, keitä he edustavat ja millä oikeudella. Vaalein valituilla edustajilla – parlamentaarikoilla ja kaupunginvaltuutetuilla – on ihmisten suoraan antama valtakirja. Eduskunnan, hallituksen tai kunnanvaltuustojen nimittämällä virkamiehillä epäsuora, mutta kuitenkin kattavan ja lakisäateisen demokraattisen prosessin tuottama valtuutus. Parlamentaarikoilla ja kunnilla on kansalliset ja kansainväliset liittonsa. Talouselämän osapuolet puhuvat omien järjestöjensä suulla – teollisuus, työnantajat, kauppakamarit ja ammattijärjestöt tietävät, että järjestäytyminen on niiden oman edun mukaista. Yksittäisten yritysten vaikutusvalta julkisissa päätöksentekoprosesseissa on tietenkin tulenarka kysymys. On vaikea sanoa, olisiko mahdollista luoda prosessi, jossa pörssiyhtiön avoin puheoikeus lopulta kuitenkin olisi nykyistä, globaalissa mitassa massiivista korruptiota parempi vaihtoehto? Tieteen ja tutkimuksen näkemyksiä halutaan nykyään kuulla yhä useammin. Suuri ratkaisematon kysymys on, kuka päättää, kenen tutkimustuloksia kuullaan, kenen ei. Kenen asiantuntija on poliittisesti soveliaampi kuin joku toinen? Muu, vapaaehtoisuuteen perustuva kansalaisyhteiskunta on vielä hankalammin määriteltävissä – kenelle lähettää kokouskutsu? Kuka jää kutsumatta? Kuinka laajaa mielipidettä edustaa kansalaisjärjestö X? Onko avuksi otettava mielipidekyselyt vai voidaanko jatkossakin luottaa siihen, että järjestökenttä itse valitsee omat edustajansa keskuudestaan? Jos hallitus tai hallitustenvälinen organisaatio valitsee vain itselleen mieleiset kansalaisjärjestöt, ollaan taas pettäväällä pohjalla.

Helpoin tapa lujittaa hallitustenvälisiin neuvotteluihin osallistuvia kansallisia delegaatioita on kutsua keskeisten toimijatahojen edustajia mukaan jo neuvottelujen valmisteluvaiheessa, ei pelkkää maskottia vasta kokousmatkalle. Poikkeuksellisen onnistuneena suomalaisena esimerkkinä pidetään Rio+10 -seurantaprosessiin osallistuneita virallisia delegaatioita. Ryhmän sisäinen tiedotus toimi tehokkaasti, esimerkiksi New Yorkin, Balin ja Johannesburgin joka-aamuiset informaatiopalaverit olivat kaikille avoimia, kokouspapereita oli tutkittu yhdessä jo Helsingissä. Näin Suomen hallituksella oli käytössään todellinen monikärkiohjus: vahva joukkue virallisia ja epävirallisia 'lähettiläitä', jotka kukin levittivät ajantasaista tietoa omille taustaryhmilleen ja toivat vastaavasti suoraa palautetta. Pääministerin johtama kansallinen kestävä kehityksen toimikunta on koottu samalla laajan osallistumisen periaatteella, mikä varmistaa keskusteluyhteyden jatkuvuuden.

Suomessa desentralisaatiolla ja paikallisdemokratiolla on pitkät perinteet. Elleivät suomalainen diplomatia ja kehitysyhteistyö tue ja korosta paikallishallinnon keskeistä osuutta hyvinvointivaltion synnyssä ja kehityksessä, esimerkiksi naisten yhteiskunnallisen aseman vakiinnuttamisessa ja kestävä infrastruktuurin ja kestävien kaupunkien rakentamisessa, minkä maalainen sitten? Voitaisiinko ajatella, että paikallishallinto ja siihen liittyvä lainsäädäntö, päätöksentekoprosessit ja tietojärjestelmät, ovat Suomen arvokkaimpia vientituotteita?

Introduction

“There is no denying that Civil Society has become a major player in policy discussions at different levels, and no government, even the most repressive, can ignore this reality. The varying approaches in asserting civil will in sustainable development – from independent initiatives in community development to collaborative implementation of initiatives with government, from purely community involvement to participation in policy formulation, from the local level to the international arena – have made all this possible.” (Banuri et al.)

Local and global, policy and implementation, governance and participation

It is politically extremely correct to talk about the importance of the local level, but that is where the consensus ends. There is neither any common understanding about what “local” is, nor any significant involvement whatsoever of local government in multilateral governance.

But the banging on the closed doors of many global conferences is getting louder, and the worldwide media never miss a good demonstration. In fact, the protests often get better coverage than the substance of the multilateral negotiations. Surprisingly, however, local government remains oddly absent, being neither in the negotiating rooms nor on the barricades. By refusing to throw stones, is it too well behaved to get heard?

Agendas on the global conference tables embrace issues that acknowledge no country borders. Academic

wisdom and political wittiness no longer suffice. Seating arrangements will have to be re-configured, formerly unknown players will have to get their rightful places – local government among them.

One of these new players is Civil Society, and its role in the United Nations (UN) system is being reassessed at present, with the Eminent Persons' Group, namely the Cardoso Panel, set up by the UN Secretary-General, focusing on exactly these issues. But whereas the approach of the Cardoso Panel can be seen as political, the seminal report *Financing Water for All*, i.e. the Camdessus Report, with its pragmatic target, has taken the topics of participation and of the role of the sub-sovereign levels to totally new discussion forums.

Using as key words the concepts local versus global, policy versus implementation, and participation versus governance, attempting rather to be polemic than academic, this paper

- Refers to the ongoing discussion about the role of Civil Society, and of local authorities in particular, in multilateral global governance
- Highlights phenomena that seem to bring the local and the global level closer to each other than ever before
- Describes the role of local government in implementing sustainable development – cities and municipalities for “people, planet and prosperity”
- Proposes further steps to strengthen the voice of local government and its capacity to implement global sustainable development agendas.

For local governments, or local authorities, the desire to get heard is not merely a representational or formal one, or a theoretical issue of democracy starting at the grassroots and local level. No, the reality is that local

governments, particularly major cities are either engines or barriers to development. Accordingly, how can development be sustainable unless land use planning, mobility planning, water and energy supply, education, health care and public procurement are provided in a sustainable manner? Or, if creativity, research and development, industry and trade don't have sustainable enabling environments at the local level?

In 2000, a new land use and building act came into force in Finland, delegating a lot of decision-making from national to local level, but also obliging this decision-making to be much more open and participatory during the planning process. It may be naive to give credit these changes solely to the push for transparency that is a feature of the new legislation, but, among other things, the close ties between political parties and real estate developers – a familiar story all over the world – are at least much weaker in Finland than earlier.

Public participation has only recently become an issue at global and national levels, even though it has been an important tool at the local level for many years. The local level is where the daily concerns of people and institutions are, and this principle of participation has to be extended from the local to the global, not only in formulating policies concerning sustainability but also in implementing them.

Local Government as a mediator between you and me, and the world

Consider this: You want a glass of water. So you go to your kitchen and get it from the tap and drink it. It's as easy as that. And as long as the water keeps running, and is clean, you're not the slightest bit interested in how that



water reaches your kitchen, or what happens to it as it slides away down the drain. You don't worry how the water has been treated, who manages it, or what kind of national and supranational legislation sets the water governance framework. You are not aware of the total costs of your water consumption, neither do you know who benefits from any profits: your city or the shareholders of a multinational company.

But what if you had to buy your daily 15–20 litres of water from a vendor every day; and you couldn't be sure whether that water was safe to drink? You might well wish for a more reliable and less costly service. You'd also want to have decent sewage and sanitation, not just the gutter, a plastic bag or a pit across the alley. In an industrialised country we take for granted that there are water utilities, along with sewage treatment and power plants. Yet the recent failures in electricity in major metropolitan regions – New York, California, Rome – have turned the unthinkable into the possible also in developed countries. But if you don't have access to a reliable water or energy service, where do you seek for help? Do you call a minister? No, for something as basic as water and energy, you do not negotiate with the national government but with someone who is much closer to you: the city, i.e. your local government!

Globalization in your everyday life and mine

To improve local infrastructure and service delivery, you might think that your mayor could go to the World

Bank and ask for funding for. But no, the mayor cannot go to Washington. The World Bank or the Regional Development Bank would point the mayor to the national government, and ask for guarantees first: bankability, collateral and rating.

The same would be true if the mayor asked a multinational company to build the infrastructure and provide the services: they'd also want bankers, and demand that the mayor first put the financing and local governance in place. The company would also point to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and agreements regulating the procurement of public services.

Yet those decisions on agreements are taken at the global level behind closed doors, even though they have tremendous influence on cities. But was the mayor – who in most cases was elected by direct popular vote – ever consulted about the city's need to access international money markets, about international financing institutions' water policies or about multilateral trade agreements? Even worse, did the mayor ever even realise that the agreements have direct impact on the city? Most unlikely.

Shopping for sustainable patterns of production and consumption

“Can you buy a can of pineapple or a pair of jogging shoes without feeling guilty?” Elina Grundström asks in her book “*Alkuperämaa tuntematon*” (Tammi 2002).

Individually, you may make a point of carefully selecting what you buy in the supermarket and try to make sure that it has been produced respecting the highest social

and environmental criteria. But can you be sure that your tax money – be it at local or national level – is spent equally justly and sustainably? Do you or your mayor have a say in the negotiations that take place within, for example, the European Union (EU), the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) or the WTO that set the rules? Globalisation affects all of us because it changes patterns of behaviour, not only in the way nation states but also municipalities have to act, and how companies relocate their operations, too. All of this in turn has a direct impact on your daily life, and mine.

Why bother about 'the local'? My hypothesis and thesis

“Never underestimate the importance of local knowledge” could be the motto of a local government organisation. Instead, it is the catchy slogan of a multinational bank: “The world’s local bank”.

In today’s globalized world the local level – we’ll later get back to what is meant and not meant by that – has an important role to play politically, economically and ecologically. Democratisation of global governance, i.e. the representation of you and me globally, requires the integration of the local level into the multilateral system of nation states, as well as the strengthening of local government. In short, it requires effective decentralization. The pay-off of inviting the local level to global negotiation tables will be increased democracy and better informed



Local and global food



decisions, which can then be more efficiently implemented.

Yet, none of this is reflected in current decision-making processes and institutions. For political reasons or due to a lack of understanding, national governments and multilateral institutions have failed to correctly acknowledge the role of the local level. In addition, the ambiguous terminology describing local levels is both a reflection of this, and a tool for maintaining the status quo. On the other side of the coin, the local level hasn't fully formulated a new role for itself. It needs to analyse thoroughly the impacts of globalisation at the local level, and it must learn how to counterbalance these impacts with local action.

'Local' without a global voice

If you take the subway in New York, or have your appendix removed in a city hospital, are you dealing with an NGO, with Civil Society or with a Major Group at the local level? Again, if you see a doctor at a state university hospital in that same city, are you being treated at the national level, by the state government, by the scientific community, or by the Major Group Scientific Community?

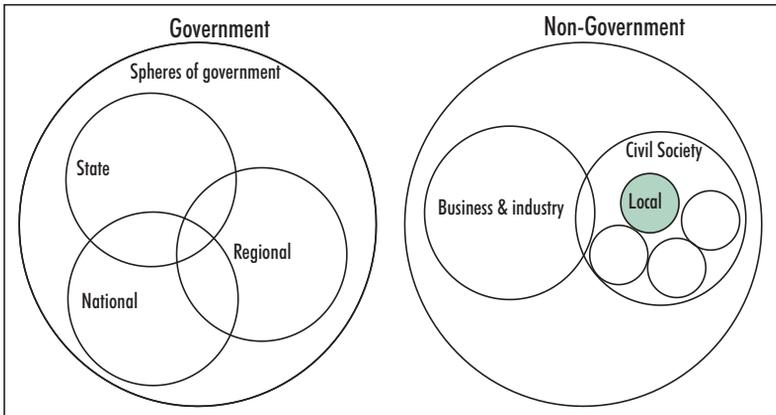
Words and concepts are powerful and political – the present government-non-government-civil-society debate

Despite the fact that local governments deal daily with consequences of multilateral – or unilateral – decisions, and despite local government leaders having relevant and rational contributions to offer, they are not consulted. And local government simply isn't happy playing just an entertainer's role, clothed in ethnic garments and telling colourful grassroots stories - for this is how majorities typically like to see minorities: decorative and amusing.

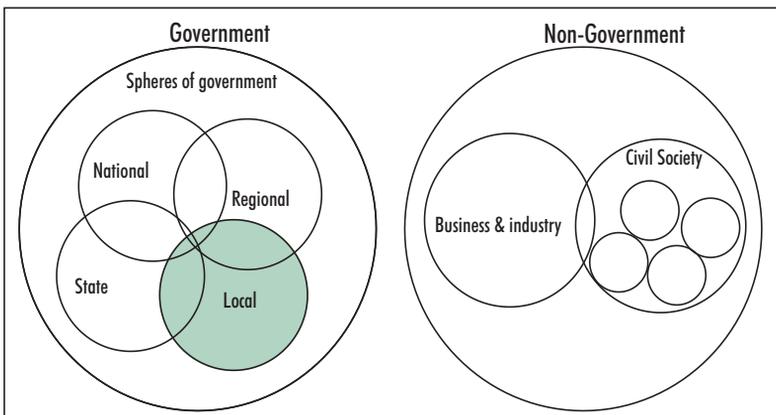
On the other side of the coin of expectations, the national, regional and global levels don't want, only subordinates to implement: Get on with the job, get your hands dirty with mud, if necessary, but leave the politics and decision-making to us! It is at this point that the difficulties of defining the local level start.

One might think that it makes no big difference what the 'local' is called, but it does! Some wordings describing the local are attached to constitutions or other legislation, others have no precise legal definition at all. Thus, at one

end is the concept “local government”, which implies a clear legal and political mandate; at the other end lie “communities” and “grassroots”, which can mean anything or nothing. The dividing line defining the position of local government on a map of governance is whether it is a sphere of government, or, whether it lies somewhere within the non-national governmental domain, often referred to as Civil Society. What I say is that local government is not non-government, it is not a “non-governmental organisation”! Local Government is in the public domain, alongside other sub-national governments and authorities, and parliaments and parliamentarians.



Local Government as part of Civil Society (above), or, Local Government as part of government (below)





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Watchdogs on barricades or policemen behind the barricades?

The role of “Watchdog” is often offered to NGOs.

Thus Greenpeace keeps an eye on the Finnish paper industry, reporting, for instance, what kind of raw material the industry uses. And a watchdog doesn’t merely protest. From a consumer’s perspective it fulfils the useful task of monitoring public interests.

In the minds of many, the ultimate expression of individual freedom are citizens’ movements, both local and global, but it is not always clear who these “non-governmental organisations” (NGOs) actually represent. The Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) work on a voluntary basis, and have no obligation to represent you or me, so whence do they derive their authority? By contrast, both the national and local governments of most states are by a constitution bound to be your advocates and representatives and mine: they have both a legitimate mandate and a responsibility to do just that.

Those who oppose decentralisation and do not want local governments to gain a stronger position have two innocent-looking arguments. The first one is that the views of national governments already incorporate the local government perspective, and thus there is no need for an independent local-level voice. The other hides behind the view of local government as a bureaucratic minority group collected under the umbrella of “Local Authorities”, which makes them seem no more representative than traffic police or fire brigades. Both of these views intend to marginalize the local sphere, the sphere of government closest to the people.

Local – local level – local authorities – local government

global...worldwide...international...trans-national... multilateral...

The United Nations...the World Bank...general assembly...
governing council...

regional organisations of states...military alliances...unions of
independent nations...The European Parliament...

The African Union...

federal...national...state-level...nation-state...the United
States...Australia...Switzerland...senate...house of
representatives...

provinces...cantons...lander...California...New South
Wales...Gauteng...Zürich...Berlin...

metropolitan areas...cities...towns...municipalities...
villages...São Paulo...New York...Jabalpur...
Zürich...Berlin... Berkeley...Greenwich Village...
city councils...

urban and rural areas, city districts, communities,
grassroots...Quartier Latin... SoWeTo...
ward councils

What is the local level? Is it small communities and villages? Or mega-cities, many of which are several times bigger than the country where I come from? The contemporary ‘biodiversity’ of systems of governance means that we’ll have to learn how to deal with the conflicts inherent in many simultaneous systems operating at different levels.

Local can mean anything between the state level in a federation and a tiny grassroots community. Even ‘regional’ or ‘national’ have been called ‘local’, when seen from a global standpoint. The problem lies in that the interpretation of ‘local’ is extremely contextual and can thus be misleading and even deliberately misused. That is why local government people insist on talking about local government, because it implies the following:

- an electoral system of representation, perhaps a local democracy with popular vote, or a different system of participatory governance
- in decision-making, a degree of independence from other spheres of government, a separation from central, federal or national government
- subsidiarity within a legislative framework, not token decentralisation but real authority based on a constitutional role that defines the tasks of local government with mandatory, not voluntary, responsibilities
- delegation of both powers and resources, backed up by a capacity to collect taxes, to co-finance, to take care of cost recovery and so forth.

Local authorities is the definition used in Agenda 21 of Rio, 1992, as one of the nine non-governmental “Major Groups”: local authorities, trade unions, business and industry, NGOs, farmers, academia, indigenous peoples, youth and women. This, however, is a less clear concept, because it implies powers which are not permanently delegated from central government but rather a central government presence at the local level, with governors or mayors appointed by central government. Local authorities are not necessarily elected representatives of citizens, but nominated bureaucrats with a limited regulatory or executive mandate. Thus, it is easy, and to a certain degree justified, to ignore their political role and understand them merely as, say, police forces and fire-brigades.

The local level, in the Political Declaration of Johannesburg, is listed as one of four levels: global, regional, national and local. Unfortunately, however, it provides no definition at all. It becomes meaningful only if it is understood as one of “all levels”.

That said, “*all levels*” remains a tricky expression, because it offers an easy way out for a diplomat who wants to persuade Local Government representatives that they have not been forgotten, when in fact, in most cases the context reveals that “at all levels” only means the national level and above. This became evident in the language used in Johannesburg: whenever the intention was that the local level should be included, it was clearly stated and the language was “at all levels, including at the local level”.

Speaking on behalf of Local Government, Cities or Civil Society?

Everybody talks about Civil Society participation, but as with local level there is no consensus about what Civil Society is! Traditional NGOs stress that Civil Society must be non-profit and must not include any public institutions or authorities, which would consequentially exclude local authorities and local government. On the other hand, some national governments insist on the inclusion of Business and Trade into Civil Society.

Instead of talking about Civil Society, the concept of nine Major Groups was introduced in Rio, and it was applied in the Johannesburg follow-up to the Rio conference. However, Major Groups and the nowadays very common expression ‘stakeholders’ are neutral expressions which circumvent the necessarily politicised debate surrounding civil versus non-civil, public versus private and government versus non-government.

The question remains: How important is it to be identified as representing Local Government and not something else? Or should it be more important to have a

local-level voice heard and get the substance of the message onto the agenda, as many believe?

A number of governments still find the concept of Local Government totally unacceptable for various – local! – reasons. Some governments prefer to talk about ‘participatory governance’, instead of ‘democracy’. For others, only Local Authorities is an acceptable concept, because it implies that they are an extended arm of national government. For others still, local government has no constitutional role, but is free to act independently, and there is very little dialogue between the local and national or federal levels.

In this debate, one argument says that local governments should focus at the work they do on the ground – at grassroots! – instead of worrying about their positioning within spheres of government. Another is that because the most outspoken local governments are predominantly urban, they could define themselves as “cities” and deal with urban issues. And indeed, an urban dimension can more and more often be found on international agendas and in the organisation charts of international agencies. Also making the term “urban” more acceptable is that it does not have the same political edge as Local Government. The difficulty with this, however, is that it would leave out more than half of the world’s population living in rural conditions, even if they are nonetheless catered for by local governments of one sort or another. The crux of the matter is that one’s classification either offers a seat at multilateral discussion tables or denies it, and at the same time predetermines who else will be at the same table.

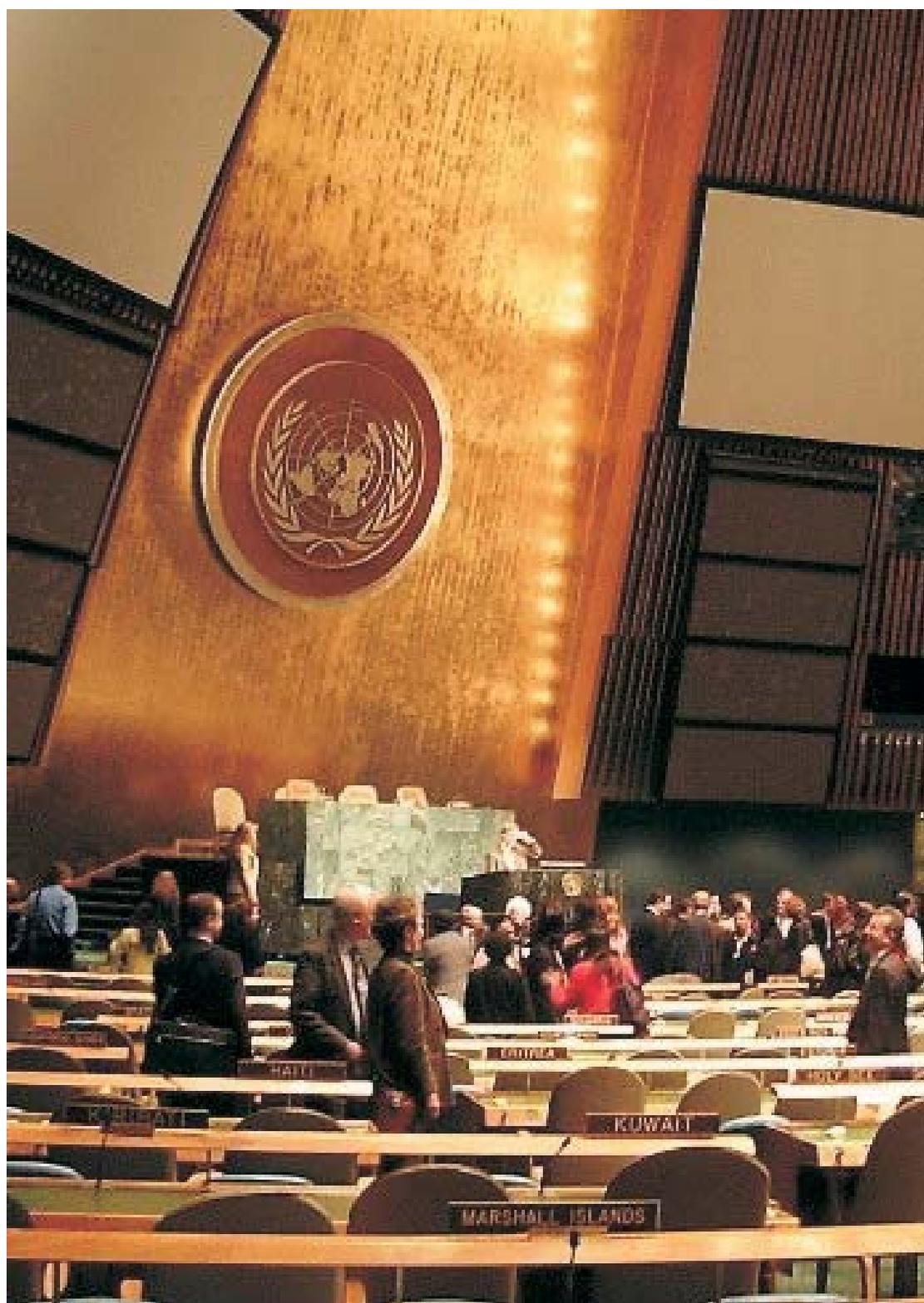
How to choose the correct flag? City-States and other scenarios

Just for a moment imagine a General Assembly of the United Nations (UN) made up not of nations but of capital cities and national local government associations, Local Government World Associations behind the flags where normally international organisations are seated, and, instead of Local Authorities, one single flag “*National Authorities*” with two seats, next to other Major Groups. A most unlikely scenario, I suggest.

The title “*cities*” could be interesting, because cities are also physical entities with clear geographical boundaries – like micro-nations – and there is little controversy about the economic role of cities. It might be worth while examining the role and governance of medieval city-states in Europe. Who knows, maybe a model derived from history could be applicable even today. However, there is no denying that the urban-rural dialectic is a major challenge; the ongoing debate whether to favour the countryside because it is poor and because people have to move out, or whether to focus on the substantial challenges arising from massive urbanization. Cities must not have a voice if in the process the hinterland is silenced. And today, it is often much more appropriate to view broader metropolitan regions than to focus only on the urban within the city boundaries.

Major Group *Local Authorities* is a good interim solution if there is a more widespread recognition of Major Groups as defined in Agenda 21 in Rio.

Stakeholders would be a flexible umbrella definition if it replaced Major Groups and included new participant groups. In an ideal world, this could allow local government a similarly independent position to what Business and Industry have now, and might eventually



enable it to join with Regional Governments and Parliamentarians. There would, however, be a deluge of new groups, and a liberal approach to allowing a lot of voices could in turn marginalize them all. – Oscar Wilde’s dilemma: you don’t want to be a member in a club that would take you as a member!

An NGO such as ICLEI can act as a *non-governmental organisation*, like WWF or IUCN, and hide as part of Civil Society. And from the point of view of the multilateral system, this is by far the easiest solution. For local governments, however, it would be a total defeat to lose their voice as a sphere of government, which needs legal frameworks, taxation, procurement policies, land use planning acts, regulation of the provision of public services. – Cities simply do not function as part of the NGO domain!

One single local government voice – or a chamber orchestra?

There are both internal and external expectations to having one single local government voice worldwide. On the inside, there are local government associations or groups of mayors that would like to see global local government body acting as the sole discussion partner on behalf of local communities worldwide. On the outside, international institutions might find it equally more convenient to deal with a single local stakeholder instead of a group of local government associations. A similar situation has occurred in certain multilateral forums in recent years, where all of Civil Society was supposed to come up with one single statement.

What is somewhat absurd is that local governments worldwide are expected to have more commonalities

among themselves than do national governments, which are not expected to come together under one banner. How can it be that local governments should be represented by a couple of people, whereas there are several hundred representing national governments?

Not surprisingly, it is by no means easy to come up with proposals for reforming institutions or structures or even informal processes. But let us list a few theoretical alternatives. Whenever difficult issues have to be solved in multilateral negotiations, governments cluster themselves into a handful of formal and informal groups and superpowers, for example G77 and China, the EU and the US. During drafting sessions, a few independent or proactive nations such as Brazil, Norway or Switzerland often play an important role as mediators. A local government group could have a similar role and bring a new aspect to the discussion, without needing to have a vote. It is a long way to move from the present model of a Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE) as an advisory body of the European Council, or a Committee of Regions (CoR) as part of European Union governance to something like a local government chamber, a House of Local Governments standing side by side with a Senate of Nation States. It is daydreaming to imagine local government having an equal representation in the governing councils of UN agencies and international organisations as national government does today, in other words, representing the same people, but at different levels. By far the easiest solution at hand would be to ask national governments to include local representatives in their negotiation teams and official delegations.

Civil Society looking for its identity and place

“The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) may make suitable arrangements for consulting with non-governmental organizations which are concerned with matters within its competence. Such arrangements may be made with international organizations and, where appropriate, with national organisations after consultation with the member of the United Nations concerned.” (United Nations Charter, Article 71)

Role of Civil Society in the UN system, The Cardoso Panel (www.un.org/reform/)

In early 2003, the UN Secretary-General called together a group of eminent persons to advise the Secretary-General on priorities for enhancing interaction between the UN and civil society including parliamentarians and the private sector. This group later became the Cardoso Panel, after its Chairperson, a former President of Brazil.

In the summer of 2003, the Cardoso Panel published a seminal background paper titled “The diversity of actors within the UN System” (<http://www.un.org/reform/pdfs/categories.htm>). The introduction of that document notes that there have been questions about what is meant by civil society. The paper “suggests that a clear distinction be made between actors that are state and non-state, and that within the non-state actors there are various categories – some of which are

generally viewed by social scientists as part of civil society and some would not”. The paper also suggests the following “typography”:

A. State or governmental actors

1. Parliaments
2. associations of parliamentarians
3. local authorities; including their regional and international federations, associations of city/town mayors, cities’ alliances

B. Private business sector

1. private sector
2. business federations
3. foundations
4. the media

C. Civil Society

1. mass organizations
2. trades-related organizations
3. faith-based organizations
4. academe
5. public benefit NGOs
6. social movements and campaign networks

D. Global public opinion

Even though it is only in an informal working document, this is the first time that local authorities are acknowledged as a sphere of government within the UN system. Yet this has been the goal of local government for a long time. Nonetheless, even this inclusion could have its risks. As mentioned earlier, many governments will be comfortable to argue that the voice of the local level already gets heard within the country and thus there is no

further need for it to be represented independently at the global level. This, however, misses the point. Both the local and the global need to be seated at the same table, as two individual voices, not as one.

Media, entertainment and advertisers

Every discussion forum that tries to grasp the definition of Civil Society and which also is unhappy with the Agenda 21 list of nine Major Groups comes up with a list of new proposals for groups that should be added. At CSD 11 it was suggested that the handicapped be listed as a Major Group. Educators, the press and advertisers are also often mentioned.

It is blatantly obvious that the press is absent from the list, even if it has probably more political power than all the other stakeholders together. But where the media belongs is not an easy matter to decide. The traditional perception would view the media as the “free press”, an independent and critical voice of opinion, much like a civil society organisation. However, in the reality of global everyday life, the media are big business, of course, and should be put in with the business, industry and trade community.

Another sector – closely related to media and entertainment – that is sometimes noted as missing from the Major Group is the advertising industry. This sector, particularly now that Sustainable Patterns of Production and Consumption has become a clearly defined sustainability target, has a heavy burden of responsibility to carry, but lacks any formally acknowledged accountability. Again, it is clear that advertising is for profit, just like most of the media, and thus not part of non-profit civil society.

Where does business and industry belong to?

Those, who still believe that Civil Society is nothing more than a grouping of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), will find out that not just local government is unhappy to be squeezed in this box. Also business and industry express concern. An interesting question emerges: can an association can be part of Civil Society while its members cannot.

The common understanding has been that the associations of corporate interests, such as chambers of commerce and industries, trade unions or federations of a particular sector of economic activity, are included in the broad definition of Civil Society, whereas their private sector constituencies are not.

It is well understood that individual companies can not apply for official NGO status under the ECOSOC rules. However, the position of associations remains ambiguous, because associations certainly don't act on their own initiative only. Their activities and policies are jointly developed and implemented with their members. The waters are further clouded by the talk of public-private partnerships and "working with the private sector", which of course means working with private companies as well as with their associations.

As the International Council of Chemical Associations noted in a discussion, there seems to be an unfortunate division between the "good" members of Civil Society who help governments to do all the right things and, on the other side, business and industry in need of guidance to become more responsible. Another unfortunate view sees business and industry as the First Class of Civil Society, seated in both the funder's and the driver's seat.

Environmental NGOs and scientific experts as political prisoners

In the 5th Pan-European Conference of Environment Ministers, Environment for Europe in Kiev (May 2003), the title for all non-national-government stakeholders was boiled down not merely to “NGOs” but to “environmental NGOs”. Intentional or not, this definition looks very much like an effort to totally marginalize Civil Society. And ask yourself this: who would define which NGOs are “environmental”, and which are not, and, furthermore, by which criteria would these NGOs be judged? Would NGOs dealing with sustainable development also be excluded, not to mention any human or civil rights groups? And would business and all the other stakeholders be left out?

At the 11th session of the Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD11) April–May 2003 in New York, a complicated process was put in place for the permanent accreditation of NGOs and other Major Groups that had received an accreditation to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) 2002 in Johannesburg. This large group certainly also includes a number of organisations that represent the Major Group “scientific community”. Simultaneously, other documents of the same CSD11 session expressed the necessity to involve more experts and scientific experts in the future. However, there was no discussion about an accreditation procedure for these special “experts”, special “scientific experts” and special “other stakeholders”. This could suggest that some experts and scientists may be politically more correct than others, and thus can enter via the front door. Whose science owns the final truth? Again, you have to ask yourself, does the new emphasis on science serve the

eradication of the precautionary principle of Rio, or the opening up of the discussion to more participants?

UNEP drafting new formulations

In the Cartagena meeting of the United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP) Governing Council (UNEP GCSS VII, 2002) a single government succeeded in erasing "Local Authorities" from a list of Major Groups, which "for the purpose of that decision" constituted Civil Society and its engagement in the work of UNEP. For the time being, this formulation remains officially valid until one of the forthcoming UNEP Governing Councils decides otherwise. According to a story that I was told, the *raison-d'être* for this decision had been that "local authorities are police and similar NGO's don't want to have them on the same side of the barrier, they are not Civil Society". – Is it really this easy to fool people at a late hour in a document drafting group?

Later, in a vacancy announcement (Chief of the Major Groups and Stakeholders Branch, issued 4 August, 2003,) UNEP used a new listing where four groups have been added:

- Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)
- Parliamentarians
- Religious groups
- The nexus between biological and cultural diversity.



urban and urban



Interestingly, local authorities are back on this list. However, the issue is far from settled, and when compared with the original Rio list of nine Major Groups, this time Youth and Farmers are missing. Also, how and why CSOs are different from NGOs will also need a lot of clarification. The nexus between biological and cultural diversity maybe has its roots in the joint UNESCO-UNEP effort to widen the concept of biodiversity, but who will represent it remains to be seen.

One obvious problem is that different UN agencies are now developing their own internal frameworks for Civil Society relations, and they also cultivate their own language, while Civil Society itself will not talk with only one agency at a time. The various processes of developing Civil Society relations are simultaneous, and will inevitably lead to a lot of hat-changing each time a new process or agency is entered.

UNEP's position vis-à-vis local government is that UNEP is directly accountable to the executive arms of the national governments, not to other legal/state constituencies such as local authorities, judges and parliamentarians. Therefore, UNEP considers these groups as part of civil society.

Another approach to clarifying the situation is to say that civil society organisations cannot be defined by whom they represent but by what they do. However, it is not easy to fit any CSO into one single box, as many see themselves having several different roles at the same time. Nonetheless, UNEP has tried to differentiate CSOs according to their functions, viz. *Representation* (organisations which aggregate citizen voices - these include NGO umbrella and network organisations and indigenous peoples groups); *advocacy and policy inputs* (organisations which provide expertise, and lobby on particular issues, e.g. think-tank groups and

research-oriented institutions, and “watch-dogs” institutions); *capacity building* (organisations that provide support – funding, training, raising awareness – to other CSOs, and which include foundations and major NGOs); *service-delivery* (organisations that develop, monitor and implement projects/programmes or services – these CSOs are often based at the grass-roots level or work closely with community-based organisations, or CBOs); *social functions* (organisations that foster collective social activities, for instance religious groups).

UN-Habitat – “The City Agency”

UN-Habitat, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, understood early on that there is a market niche for the urban dimension even in the UN. To a certain degree, Habitat would, in fact, like to have a monopoly on local government issues, and to interpret the ‘brown’ built environment agenda as something distinctly different from the ‘green’ one, i.e. the natural environment and its resources. A couple of years ago there was even a plan to add “The City Agency” to Habitat’s name. Probably a more realistic strategy will be that all UN agencies will have to consider the urban, and the rural, and the local dimension in their activities if they want to see their projects implemented.

UN-Habitat has in its structures an interesting embryo of formal Local Government representation: United Nations Advisory Council of Local Authorities (UNACLA). UNACLA’s membership is by invitation of the Executive Director of Habitat. Members are Mayors of big cities or Presidents of certain international or regional local government associations. UNACLA has sometimes claimed to be the only body representing Local

Government in the United Nations. This of course cannot be the case, because local government, by its very nature democratically elected, cannot be represented by a group of invitations-only individuals. Neither can Local government be represented by an advisory body of a single UN-agency. Local Government will have to represent itself, through its various networks, associations and organisations. This said, there is certainly a focal role for UNACLA to fulfil.

Global and Local – the framework with spheres

“Decentralization has become an agenda for all. Its implementation is becoming more and more a test of deepening the democratisation process, a condition for the modernization of States and good governance of public affairs.

In Africa, decentralisation has become a definite craze and, along with regional integration, is more recognized as one of the ways to overcome the current governability crisis of African states.

It is in an effort to maintain decentralization among the priorities on the African states’ political agenda that African central and local decision-makers decided to create a platform for dialogue on decentralisation and local development – a platform known as the Africities Summit. ...

During the first two editions of Africities in Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire in 1998, and Windhoek, Namibia in May 2000, national and local decision-makers in Africa recognized the important contribution which European institutions and organisations make in supporting decentralisation in African countries. ...

Yours Sincerely

Mr Artur Hussene Canana

Mayor of Maputo

President of the Africities Political Committee”

(from a letter of invitation to participate in the Africities 2003 congress in Yaounde, Cameroon)

Decentralization and political barriers preventing it

The UN, of course, has no mandate at the local level, and that is why it is easy to say that the UN must not interfere in such domestic affairs as decentralisation in sovereign nations. Indeed, this very argument was used by a major country during CSD11, when a proposal was discussed to involve the local level in reporting during the follow-up of the JPoI. But this non-interference argument is not acceptable if it is a way to forestall exploring the role of local government in global governance.

The emergence of the local level as a sphere of government has many roots. For example, “Local self-government” has ancient British roots. Locally elected people, who were not paid for their work, solved local issues. But this did not yet imply that municipal authorities were in any way formally decentralised by national government. (Mennola)

The term “decentralisation”, of course, implies that powers are delegated from a centre ‘above’ to a ‘lower’ level. But instead of referring to levels, I prefer a non-hierarchical concept, such as that of “spheres of government”, which was introduced into the new South African constitution. The Europeans, instead of talking about decentralisation, often use “subsidiarity” and speak of decision-making at the most appropriate level, in other words about people taking care of their own concerns.

A recent development, namely the construction of the welfare state, particularly in Sweden in the 1980s – has radically changed the character of local governments in Northern Europe and shifted the scope of their work from politics to service provision. This requires much more skilled manpower and greater financial resources than

does simply making decisions without the heavy burden of having to implement them.

My hypothesis is that, in one way or another, the rest of the world will have to follow the northern European route in empowering the local level, if national governments want to improve the living conditions of their citizens in the long term – and that is what sustainable development is all about.

The challenge is to overcome the many barriers discouraging national governments from accepting the local level and also empowering it. In some countries, local politics tend to be interpreted as a continuation and reinforcement of old tribal structures, which weaken the influence of the capital. Elsewhere, local political groups may be more closely linked to economic interest groups and redistribution of national public assets than to traditional party lines. Furthermore, in many countries, it is not unusual for the political opposition to be in power at the local level, and, unsurprisingly, the last thing that the central government wants is to have to deal with counteractive local decision-makers on an equal basis.

The Finns have developed an interesting tradition of consensus in local politics, which helps to reduce conflicts of national and local politics. The elected majority takes the Chairmanship of the City Council, but the Chair of the City Board, i.e. the Executive, will come from another party. Additionally, all the major parties are represented in the City Board. The Mayor and Deputy Mayors, despite in most cases having a political background, are civil servants who are elected by the City Council for a period longer than the electoral period. Furthermore, they often represent all the major parties that have seats in the City Council, not just the majority. Naturally, this does not prevent local leaders from criticizing national politics, but the political constellations are more complex than in a

two-party or majority-minority system, where power may shift completely and throughout the governance structure after elections.

At one end of the scale are countries where political power is held firmly in the national capitals, at the other end are the countries with ‘absolute freedom’, where that freedom also means that the central or federal government has little to do with the local level. In these cases, central governments might well say, “We have no problem with the Local Level, it’s great! Just don’t ask us to give them anything. No money, no authority, no legislative frameworks!” At this end of the spectrum, Local Government is similar to business: good for voluntary partnerships, without anything mandatory, and with no legal frame. But complete freedom can be as much a barrier as total denial of local powers, even though the objections to decentralisation have their foundation in totally different political contexts.

‘Sub-sovereign’ or ‘sub-national’ levels

Much more than the local level, the sub-national/sub-sovereign level and separatist movements can create a direct threat to the nation state.

During the Johannesburg Summit, a new organisation was established: Regional Government Network for Sustainable Development (nrg4SD) (www.nrg4sd.net). In their side event in New York, during CSD11, May 2003, I asked if they saw themselves as part of national government, local government or as part of Civil Society, i.e. as a CSO. They did not like my question, and replied that they wanted to define themselves as separate from the others. How that will succeed remains to be seen, as it is obvious that there

could be even more political resistance to sub-national separatism than to local governments, which, anyway, don't see themselves as militant entities or political movements. Local government is pragmatic: if a sub-sovereign level, typically a metropolitan region, shares the same problems in delivering water or providing public transport, there should be no barriers hindering cooperation between neighbouring cities.

The concept of sub-sovereign seems to be useful whenever there are several 'levels' of government under the national level, as the Swiss cantons, the German Federal States, Japanese Prefectures etc. Until now, however, only the Camdessus report seems to have used this concept more widely.

When money is short, local is close; sub-sovereign level in the Camdessus report

The World Panel on Financing Water Infrastructure, under the chairmanship of M. Michel Camdessus, the former President of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), launched its report, Financing Water for All (FWA), at the 3rd World Water Forum (WWF3) in Kyoto in March 2003.

One might not have really expected this report to be ground-breaking in pointing out the importance of the local level – the sub-sovereign issue, as they put it. On the other hand, there is a certain irony if, when money is dearly needed, and in a big way, the heads of international financing institutions (IFIs) and of multinational water companies, who were all represented on the Panel, turn to municipalities, the poorest of the poor.

In the foreword of the report, Chairperson Camdessus defines the straightforward task of the Panel:

“Against the background of the Millenium celebrations and the Johannesburg Earth Summit (sic!), all the member states of the United Nations are committed, by 2015, to reducing by half the proportion of the world’s population without access to water and sanitation. Our main task has been to indicate the financial means for achieving this.” He writes about “all levels of responsibility, from village communities up to the United Nations”, and about good governance and decentralisation. Decentralisation had already been one of the Bonn Keys, December 2001, one of the final documents of the International Conference on Freshwater. “Our feeling is that the future of water is linked to a more participatory form of managing society, in which women take their rightful place.”

The Panel asks where the funds for water come from, and lists, among others, local governments, local banks, local communities, local private companies and local entrepreneurs (page 6 of the report). An interesting remark, with validity beyond this issue is the following: “All governments, agreeing on the importance of water, subscribe to internationally inspired commitments and undertakings. But their spending performance is at odds with their rhetoric: in most countries the water sector is given a disproportionately small share in the budget. Part of the explanation is that water tends to be a local responsibility, and local and national priorities differ.” (page 9)

In its final proposals the Panel notes that “there is clear evidence that so far water has suffered from a lack of financing, particularly at grass-roots and local level, and a lack of monitoring at national and global level” (page 14).

One whole chapter is devoted to *Sub-sovereign entities* (pages 15–17) and another one to *Promoting local capital markets and savings* (pages 17–18). “The sub-sovereign level of government has the greatest potential to raise the quantity and quality of water services. In most countries, local governments – or their public local water authorities – are responsible for providing collective water services. Where provision is inadequate, sub-sovereign bodies can best identify local solutions, organise their implementation and manage distribution. There is a better chance of good choices being made over the technology and level of service being provided if the decisions are taken at a decentralised level. Mistakes made over these crucial choices can kill any hope of financial sustainability for the water service providers concerned.

“Sub-sovereign bodies can allow local participation, have a thorough understanding of local problems and issues and enable quick decision-making at the local level. An inclusive government can energise local participation in building solutions. The sub-sovereign can also handle a wide range of project sizes, including the very small. But one of the main blocks to progress in water is the sub-sovereigns’ lack of access to money and lack of good management skills.” (page 15)

Following up the Camdessus Report, the World Bank/IMF Development Committee has discussed the report and issued a positive five-page statement with a commitment to address some of the specific recommendations of the report, such as “sub-sovereign instruments – a new Municipal Finance Group has been created with the intention of making direct investments in municipalities, without sub-sovereign guarantees”.

National and local priorities – do they differ from each other?

Only ten years ago, to talk about “the foreign policy of a city” might have almost amounted to treason. That is solely the responsibility of nation states, would have been the angry reply. But the world has moved on, and today many metropolises have Deputy Mayors in charge solely of international affairs – Paris and Sao Paulo are prime examples. In Europe, many cities, not only capitals, and not only major cities of the European Union, but active cities and regions have their own office, or “embassy”, in Brussels. Cities want to be seen and heard; they also want to be close to the funding mechanisms of the EU. Municipal international cooperation is not just “twinning” or, for instance, the “city-to-city cooperation” that originated in the cold war years between West European and Soviet cities. Cities form regional and global networks in order to learn from each other, to work together, even when they compete with each other. Networking also multiplies their purchasing power on the international markets. Diplomacy and foreign policy have become local-level activities as well. Maybe – despite the competition among cities – it is only defence that remains within the competence of the national sphere. That said, even issues such as security, conflict resolution and crime prevention, which earlier were typically considered national affairs, are today also pressing local issues.

World Trade has traditionally been regarded as a multilateral issue. Yet most cities were born around local market places; additionally, employment, commerce, industry, subsidies, taxation, production patterns, transport and logistics are also very much local issues. The

provision of public services is a case in point. But have local governments been invited to the GATS negotiations? You know the answer by now.

Water is a good example illustrating potential conflicts between local, national and multinational interests. A nation state has an interest in protecting the welfare of a multinational company that is headquartered within its borders. A city in another country, however, might, instead of selling its water and energy utilities to the multinational, prefer to guarantee the provision of freshwater and sanitation according to its own criteria, and would eventually even want to use the existing publicly owned utility to secure employment for its citizens. If seen as a global trade issue, delivering basic services at the local level could easily lead to controversies between different spheres of interest.

Would multilateral agreements be different if they were negotiated by local governments worldwide instead of national governments? And if yes, how? How do the national and the local governments' points of view on the same matter differ from each other? Perhaps the roles could be defined thus: the national level would be legislative and the local level the executive; both would be representative, yet totally inseparable and interdependent?

Once, when I discussed the need for the local level to get its voice heard in multilateral negotiations, an experienced diplomat – with the best of intentions – nodded his head and acknowledged that yes, why not, “in those specific issues that concern you”. I had to ask which are the issues he thought would have no relevance for the local level, for I could not think of any myself. Neither could he.

From grassroots up – both representation and policy-making!

Representation – democracy – could be described as an upstream process, bottom-up reaching from villages and communities to local governments – the first of the layers that cover the globe completely – to other sub-national levels (states, cantons, provinces, prefectures, etc) to sovereign states and various sub-regional coalitions of the willing (EU, G77, G8 etc) to international and multilateral organisations, such as the UN or the international financing institutions.

However, in a world of equity and participation, representation is not a stable pyramid but a multi-dimensional dynamic process. All parts are linked to each other. ‘Low’ and ‘high’, ‘up’ and ‘down’ are no absolutes but contextual definitions. The Local must be in direct dialogue with the Global, as well as with the Regional, National and Sub-sovereign.

During the Stockholm Water Week (August 2003) the European Commission arranged a seminar about the European Union’s Water Initiative (EUWI), which had been published in Johannesburg a year earlier. There were many references to the local level, local communities, Civil Society, IWRM and governance; however, no one mentioned Local Government and Cities! I expressed my concern that if cities were not directly involved, and if there was no local water governance in place, there would be no water, either for agriculture, or industry, or for the wealthy or the poor. The reactions were varied. The representative of NEPAD reminded us how he had said that *everyone* would be involved in a multi-stakeholder process, and by so saying the local level was thereby implicitly included. Someone from the European Commission mentioned that the EU has decentralized its

programmes, but water and sanitation have not been national priorities; he noted that perhaps more work should be done in that area. The representative of African Water ministers (AMCOW) said very poignantly that national governments will have to work with local governments nationally, and EUWI has to make sure that this happens.

Vertical and horizontal – policy and implementation

Implementation of policies can be seen as a vertical process, where

- global targets, such as the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs), are translated into
- national policies, targets and timelines, where
- national legislation and programmes create the framework for implementation
- national resources are allocated
- tasks, responsibilities and targets are delegated to sub-national levels
- implementation tools are developed together with the local level.

If representation is a bottom-up process, then likewise is monitoring: the local level reports to national and global levels how it has succeeded in implementing set targets. When the CSD11 discussed the follow-up of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI), I could not comprehend why the local level was not mandated to report the numbers of people it had provided access to freshwater, sanitation and clean energy to. How can we know how much the local level has contributed to

reducing the number of people living in poverty or to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions? How on earth are the national governments going to do this job if not with local governments?

Monitoring is not only about follow-up, but also a horizontal process of mutual learning: description of benchmarks, success stories, failures and mistakes. This is how new policies, strategies and tools can be developed, in horizontal cooperation with the local level worldwide. Advocacy and mutual learning in particular are processes in which local government associations have an important role to play in assisting cities that want and need to work with each other.

Democracy, participatory governance or “Instant-Mix Imperial Democracy”?

There is a fairly common understanding and a shared view that dictatorships don't work at any level any more, be it in a family, enterprise, country or an international entity. Some may prefer civilized or educated dictatorships, as they say, to bad democracies, but that is a tricky choice. Exclusion narrows, whereas participation widens, extending horizons and bringing more viewpoints. You cannot distance yourself from reality any more, to see it from your own perspective alone. A broader consensus also diminishes the risk of making wrong decisions, of getting into conflict because of them, or of losing money on badly judged investments. Participatory decision-making processes simply seem to make sense and result in more rational decisions.

Implementation of global targets requires action at the local level. By the same token, local sustainable development requires adherence to global targets and

national policies. But at the moment, global targets and rules are being set at the global level through processes which leave out the local perspective. Global governance lacks participatory governance – some call it a “democracy deficit” – which can be counteracted by introducing a firmly based role for local government worldwide.

The barriers against including local government are tied up with attitudes towards the individual in general, towards you and me. These attitudes range from extreme individual freedom, which is almost void of meaning, to a full subordination of the individual to the nation state, where the individual has no value.

Local governments, however, have to become conscious of their new role as a mediator between the individual and the global system of governance. They also have to find new, more representative ways to work together worldwide. And finally, they have to become stronger and more robust themselves, and work together not only globally, but regionally, nationally and first and foremost, within metropolitan areas. This is how your voice, and mine, can eventually be heard wherever decisions are made that have an impact on our lives

This was the optimist speaking. Should we instead accept the cynical view that democracy has been sold to the highest bidder? What will the alternatives be if Arundhati Roy’s assessment (below) is correct? Has democracy indeed been reduced to a pretty but empty shell? Or will the current failings of democracy spur us to find new ways to bring democracy back to its roots?

“Democracy, the modern world’s holy cow, is in crisis. And the crisis is a profound one. Every kind of outrage is being committed in the name of democracy. It has become little more than a hollow word, a pretty shell, emptied of all content or meaning. It can be whatever you

want it to be. Democracy is the Free World's whore, willing to dress up, dress down, willing to satisfy a whole range of taste, available to be used and abused at will."

"Until quite recently, right up to the 1980's, democracy did seem as though it might actually succeed in delivering a degree of real social justice. But modern democracies have been around for long enough for neo-liberal capitalists to learn how to subvert them. They have mastered the technique of infiltrating the instruments of democracy – the "independent" judiciary, the "free" press, the parliament – and molding them to their purpose. The project of corporate globalization has cracked the code. Free elections, a free press, and an independent judiciary mean little when the free market has reduced them to commodities on sale to the highest bidder."
(Arundhati Roy)



*Local government session in Johannesburg,
September 2002.*

Global context, local stories – what is happening out there?

Local governments have to perform on a daily basis, and to put it bluntly, ha little time to consider, what the name of the global agenda is, be it Agenda 21, Habitat Agenda, Rio, Istanbul, Johannesburg, Montreal or Kyoto Protocol. Looking from the local perspective, all the issues are inseparably intertwined. – We’ve all heard of the butterfly’s wing -effect, where a small move can be the origin of a big change. And the opposite is also true. Would you have thought, for an example, that the collapse of the Soviet Union would have any consequences for the land use planning of Helsinki? Back in the 1980s, the passenger traffic between Tallinn, the capital of – then Soviet – Estonia, and Helsinki, was confined to a few ferries that could dock in the shadow of the cruisers sailing to Stockholm. In the post-Soviet era, after Estonia had become independent, everything changed as the tourist and business travel grew exponentially, and a separate harbour had to be built for this traffic. Had this not been the case, the prime waterfront location would now most probably be occupied by luxury apartments or offices and the old warehouses would eventually have been demolished, instead of being restored for travel agencies, customs and check-in.

Many of the following examples of local action come from recent publications or articles, which are listed in the Annex.

Cities at work – green or brown agendas?

Local governments have little time to ponder on the colour of the agendas that they are implementing. It doesn't matter to them whether they are dealing with 'green' issues, i.e. the natural environment, or 'brown', the built environment, or indeed any other colour of the rainbow. Whether the local development is urban or rural there can be no separation of agendas. Similarly, by keeping different issues in separate silos – water, land use, energy, mobility, health, education, etc. – you'll never succeed in solving complex issues: everything is interrelated and interdependent. If you limit yourself to a green agenda, you may have a flowerpot here and a football-field there, but neither a sustainable city nor a liveable community.

Jeb Brugmann, the founder of the concept of “the worldwide Local agenda 21 (LA21)”, looks at the same question from another perspective. He describes LA21 as “a new global agenda to provide communities with strategic support for their achievement of local agendas”. Going back to the history of LA21 he notes that “Many trace the origins of LA21 to the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). Doubters and detractors in the international development community frequently use this misattribution to try to reduce LA21 to a program within the global 'green' agenda. In fact, the origins of LA21 practice and strategy predated the UNCED and had quite different roots.” (Brugmann)

Local governments implementing sustainable development – Not only what, but how?

Most basic services, in one way or another, are provided within the local public domain. But that alone does not guarantee sustainable development. The critical question to ask is *how* they are provided. Will the global common goods – water, energy, air, soil, food, security, ... the list is being heavily debated and has yet to be defined – be protected at the same time as the services are secured. You can provide access to freshwater by transporting it in small plastic bottles from the other side of the world, or you can secure access to energy while producing hazardous wastes that pollute groundwater, air, soil and the food chain and cause irreparable, long-term damage to human health. You can try to bring security with armed guards and closed gates, but that will destroy your community. You can create mobility solutions, such as chauffeur-driven limousines, for the few, but at the same time leave the many queuing for over-crowded open trucks. The point is that a system cannot be sustainable if production leads to pollution, illness and unjustifiable inequality.

The role of local government is to safeguard the public interest and the sustainability of production and consumption of basic services. But something is seriously wrong if in the process of opening up global markets this basic responsibility of governments at all levels is diminished because it is seen as a barrier to “liberalisation of trade”, when in fact it must be an integral part of any new regime of international trade. Once again, water is a good example. Some human rights lawyers argue that water is a human right, not a commodity or a service. Naturally, water should be managed professionally, in an

economically sustainable manner, with a fair cost recovery system, but all of those are matters of governance, not of trade!

The customer is king. Public procurement in OECD countries makes up to 15% of the GDP. If governments at all levels choose products and services that are produced in a sustainable manner, they can make a huge difference.

Public transport is one of the key services that most local authorities have to think of. Once again, it is not a utility that can be managed independently, by traffic planners alone. It is a function of factors such as land use planning, image of the public transport system, and quality of the service, i.e. reliability, comfort, efficiency, pricing, network, energy efficiency, and so on. Does the system support equal access and help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, air pollution and noise? Does it support the local economy and employment? Does it help create a liveable urban space?

Many cities have shifted from ‘rational’ management to strategic leadership (Sinisalmi). New management tools are needed. Triple Bottom Line (TBL) reporting and ecoBUDGET are among such new instruments that have recently been developed for non-profit organisations and municipalities.

The following collection of 17 short urban stories intends to give a real-life glimpse into how globalisation hits the local level in the everyday life of a city, and what local sustainability can mean.

Urban transformations in Almada, Portugal

When you cross the river Tejo, coming from Lisbon over the old Bridge of the 25th of April, renamed after the



date of the Carnation Revolution, you arrive in the City of Almada. Looking left, you see a huge red crane on which is written the name Lisnave. It used to be the symbol of one of the biggest shipyards in the world, but it was closed down at the beginning of 2001. Certainly the city was not consulted when the financial conditions were created that forced the shipyard to quit Almada, Portugal and Europe, leaving thousands of families without work and the city with a vacant but heavily polluted piece of land in a prime location.

Almada, a municipality of over 100,000 inhabitants, is an extraordinary mix of urban landscapes: miles of beaches facing the Atlantic, an old centre with narrow winding streets, farmland with cows, a naval base, warehouses without roofs, areas of multistorey social housing from the 1970s and with almost no public spaces, urbane squares from the 1950s, with cafes shaded by trees, and an impressive refurbished shopping retail centre with a plaza for public events, a park, and a library.

The Lady Mayor of Almada, Ms. Maria Emília Neto de Sousa and the Director of the Environmental Planning Department, Ms Catarina Freitas, were the driving forces in organizing an international competition to decide the future of 115 hectares of brownfield sites comprising the former shipyard, a landfill area, and its surroundings with layers of built history dating from different periods. The major procedural innovation of this competition is the combining of environmental analysis with the urban schemes.

However, beyond that, the competition was also signal of who was in charge of the redevelopment: the City of Almada. The landowner, in this case the national government, had already drafted a high-rise luxury housing scheme on the site without consulting the city, and without any analysis of the soil. By its action, the city reminded the government that it had the sole power to determine over land use, and that it had no intention of giving that power away.

“São Paulo becomes more international” – Mayors become global champions

Most Mayors are very careful not to spend too much time abroad, because they know that the local press would portray them as failing to focus seriously enough on local affairs, and instead spending money on foreign relations that bring no gain to the citizens. The press loves to do this, particularly if local elections are approaching.

However, the city of São Paulo is an example of the opposite: the Mayor has made it clear that in order to solve its enormous problems the city needs all the know-how that it can learn from other cities all over the world. To this purpose, she also takes an active role in local government world associations, all of which is proudly reported in the city’s web-based electronic, English-language newsletter.



“Mayor Marta Suplicy could not fail to attend the 3rd World Forum of Local Authorities for Social Inclusion (January 21 and 22), since one of the highlights of the meeting in Porto Alegre will be the unification of organizations from cities and local governments, a topic of most importance to the Mayor since the beginning of her administration. On January 23rd, the Mayor will attend the Opening Ceremony of the World Social Forum (WSF), to be held until the 28th. On both occasions the Mayor will address the fight against poverty and social exclusion, and related policies implemented during her administration – which have already been acknowledged even by the European Union. Marta Suplicy will also be at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. On January 27 and 28 she will meet other world leaders to discuss critical points of the international agenda.” (Monthly Electronic Newsletter of the Secretariat of International Relations, January 2003 – Ed. #1)

Local government leaders like declarations, too...

Since the Local Government Session (LGS) in Johannesburg, local governments have organised major regional meetings in order to analyse the Johannesburg Outcomes and to discuss the next steps. These post-Johannesburg meetings have already taken place in Latin America, Europe and Asia-Pacific. The Africities Summit took place in Cameroon in December 2003. It is obvious that Local Government worldwide is now much more conscious of its global role and responsibilities than before Johannesburg. This means that both strengthening local government through capacity building, national legislation and national policies – decentralisation – and

planning local implementation strategies and tools are discussed. The paradigm of Sustainable Development is a priority in cities, be they in Chile, Uganda, Italy, China, Japan or Australia.

Declarations similar to the final documents of ministerial meetings have been prepared in the mayoral meetings in Johannesburg, Ñuñoa, Kolding, Sydney and Yaoundé. The language of these declarations is often more clumsy than truly inspirational, but the process of drafting the texts assists greatly in creating a common understanding of the issues, strategies and goals.

Latin American mayors met “post-Johannesburg” in Ñuñoa, Chile

In the meeting in Ñuñoa, among the 100-plus mayors from over 20 countries were mayors from North-Western cities of the South American continent, who had never travelled outside of their own country before. I was reminded of how Finnish municipal civil servants would, already in the 19th century, journey to continental Europe to do benchmarking, long before the concept was coined. They travelled to find out how the most advanced engineers ran water utilities, for example, and took their newly acquired knowledge home. Even today, we still enjoy the fruits of those study trips – building infrastructure is a truly long-term investment of not only money and material resources, but of know-how. How silly not to try to learn from your colleagues in other countries!

The Mayor of Ñuñoa, Pedro Sabat, had been in the Local Government Session in Johannesburg, and he was proud to announce the first Post-Johannesburg regional meeting of local government leaders, who then signed the



Mayor of Ñuñoa, Pedro Sabat

Ñuñoa Charter. A strong message about the urgency of decentralization was directed at the national governments of the continent. It was obvious that the meeting succeeded in awakening a totally new self-consciousness of local government in Latin America. Below are just a few paragraphs out of the Charter, the complete version of which can be found on the website www.iclei.org/redal21

...

4. Fight poverty

Municipalities seek to build a foundation for dignified life in a cohesive society through the just, intelligent and efficient use of resources and the facilitation of equal social access. In order to achieve greater sustainability, we will use all of our creativity and capacity for innovation, based on the principles of equality, efficiency, self-sufficiency and democracy.

We therefore make the unwavering commitment to establish policies aimed at promoting decent employment, strengthening the local economy and providing skills training for the community. Environmental protection shall be an integral part of our strategy for poverty eradication.

5. Guarantee peace, justice and security

Local governments in Latin America and the Caribbean are aware of the fact that the lack of transparency, future prospects, tolerance and understanding generates distrust, fear and violence. Similarly, we understand that sustainable development is not possible without peace and security for our cities.

Therefore, we assume the responsibility to promote and facilitate a consensus among all groups and sectors of our communities, thus facilitating the design of a long term strategy for sustainable development. We commit ourselves to promoting a new code of ethics to restore and generate values that our societies need in the present day. We will find the basic pillars within a culture of dialogue, solidarity, peace, and non-violence.

...

12. We will use effective instruments and tools
Sustainability is a creative process in search of an equilibrium which extends to all aspects of the decision-making process. We will employ a wide range of instruments for the collection and interpretation of environmental, social, economical and financial data to facilitate decision-making, accountability, and supervision by citizens.

Starting from the planning stage, we will consider the use of regulatory, economic, communication and participation tools, such as: participatory budgets, by-laws, taxes, and duties, accompanied by awareness-raising mechanisms. We declare our willingness to incorporate new tools, especially those arising out of experiences in the region that accelerate our progress towards sustainability, such as self-assessment and e-governance, among others.

13. We will promote and facilitate cooperation among the different levels of government

National governments have recognised the effectiveness of local actions. This is why they have now assigned us new responsibilities with regards to service provision. The challenge now is to transfer the basic technical and economic resources required to adequately carry out these new functions. For this reason, we demand our legislative authority be recognised.

Sustainable development is the responsibility of all levels of government. Local governments must be included in the planning and implementation of national policies for sustainable development. We will prepare the necessary proposals to this end. We hence pledge to coordinate actions with other levels of government. In this respect, we will decidedly support decentralisation processes and the strengthening of local governments.

AFRICITIES – AFRICITÈS

About 2000 African mayors and local leaders met in Yaoundé, Cameroon in December 2003 to discuss access to basic services – water, sanitation, energy, solid waste, education, culture and health – financing, gender equity, partnerships and participation, urban security, governance and decentralisation. These discussions were at first among themselves and development partners, but on the closing day also with African local government ministers.

We (the Mayors and local leaders attending Africities 3) also stressed that far from weakening the State, decentralization has proved to be a determining factor in stimulating local development, and enabling citizens to increase their participation in management and decision-making processes in cities. (Mayor's Declaration, draft language)

One of the most powerful speakers of the conference was, as the local newspaper put it, “ace Nigerian Professor, Akini Mabogunje”, who gave a keynote address.

“The whole gamut of problems that halt Africa’s decentralisation process according to Professor Akini, is the failure to understand the challenge and to start action. Basic services are lacking. These include; sanitation, waste disposal, and electricity. The Nigerian professor was particularly irked at what he described as unsatisfactory performance of the African continent in council management, Less than 40 percent of the rural population have access to water and electricity, he said, blaming the situation on too much dependence on the central government for the supply of services. The task is certainly too heavy for the central government that sometimes find itself forgetting certain important services.



Governments, according to Professor Akini, provide services and go to rest forgetting that the population is constantly on the rise. In which case, not only are the services provided inhomogeneous, they are equally inconsistent. As part of the solution, he proposes a strong public/private sector partnership and subsequent mobilisation of resources. The latter solution should be channelled to the people through traditional set ups and methods because of their transparency and accountability. As it is difficult for local councils to raise the money to meet the needs of their people, they must resort to borrowing, an act that is quite intriguing. Of course, borrowing means accepting to pay back. The challenge for local councils is not really borrowing but having the credibility of paying back.”

“In the face of all these huddles, it becomes important to involve the population in the decision-making and management process. ‘Do not undermine the intelligence of the people; even when they are illiterate, ignore them and they give you the exit option... ignore you’, Professor Akini said.”

“Africities 2003 appears to be a turning point in the whole drive towards decentralised democracy in Africa.”
(Nyuylime)

Local versus regional in the new constitution of the European Union

The constitutional role of Local Government is traditionally stronger in Europe, particularly in Northern Europe, than in most other regions of the world. This is why the debate about the new constitution of the European Union has also included local dimensions.

“The regional and cohesion policies of the European Union must pay greater attention to the needs of urban areas and the central role of major cities in all of the current and future Member States. This was the message presented by Wolfgang Tiefensee, Mayor of Leipzig and President of EUROCITIES, to Romano Prodi – President of the European Commission, Michel Barnier – Commissioner for Regional Policy, and Franz Fischler – Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development.

The EUROCITIES President was taking part in the “Cohesion and Constitution” Conference organised by the European Commission, which took place in Brussels today (8 July 2003). The aim of this Conference was to address the roles and responsibilities of the cities and regions as stakeholders and actors in the future Cohesion Policy of the EU.

Mr Tiefensee argued that the future Cohesion Policy of the European Union should not focus only on the least developed regions. “The majority of cities are facing the challenges of social and economic change, and at the same time they are the main actors in European competitiveness. The EU must therefore take the central role of cities into account by mainstreaming the urban dimension across its Cohesion Policy.”

EUROCITIES is calling for the Structural Funds to be revised in support of the Lisbon Strategy of the European Union, which combines social, economic and environmental objectives. Mr Tiefensee insisted that cities should be seen not only in terms of their problems and needs, but also in terms of their economic potential.

The EU must move away from the separation between city and countryside, and the traditional focus on industrial conversion and agricultural support. The future Cohesion Policy should support both urban and rural development within a common approach.

Mayor Tiefensee introduced the EUROCITIES Position Paper on The Future of Cohesion Policy in Europe, which calls for a strong urban dimension in the Structural Funds, and sets out an “urban menu” of 12 priorities for action. These include: Developing economic clusters, Local employment creation, Access to education and training, Sustainable urban transport, Integration of migrants and asylum seekers, and Improving the quality of life.

Finally, the EUROCITIES President underlined that the European Union’s Cohesion Policy will not achieve its intended results unless it is accompanied by simpler procedures and substantially increased financial resources. He said that programmes should be implemented by development consortia involving the relevant local, regional and national authorities, with multi-partite agreements which provide a framework for cooperation, whilst also making clear the distribution of responsibilities among the participating partners." (EUROCITIES news release, 8 July 2003)

GATS and local government – Threat to domestic regulation?

“Cancun is the half-way staging post for the ongoing WTO “Doha Development Round” negotiations. Of particular interest to local authorities are the negotiations on the General Agreement in Trade in Services (GATS). Whilst only a limited number of GATS issues will be addressed at Cancun, the meeting will be used as an opportunity to build up momentum for finalising the agreement.

GATS is an ‘opt in’ agreement where countries have to specify which services they are willing to put on the

table and subject to the GATS obligations and they make requests to other countries to make offers in return. The EU has recently published its GATS offer indicating services the EU member states are willing to subject to international terms of trade, as well as its requests to other countries. At a recent European Commission Trade meeting, John Clark of the Commission's Trade Directorate General stated that "*The EU's offer on GATS is one of the most ambitious so far, although for some countries it doesn't go far enough*". However, he also pointed out that "*there have not been similar significant offers from other WTO Member States*" and he was openly critical of the "poor" offers made by the USA and Canada, amongst others. He noted that the developing countries seemed to want to see further movement from the developed countries regarding other key trade areas, including TRIPS and the Agriculture Agreement, before they will show their cards regarding GATS.

Local authority concerns have been raised about GATS regarding the ambiguity of the definition of 'public services' in the agreement. In Article I.3 certain services are classified as exempt from GATS commitments but only where they are clearly "*supplied in the exercise of government authority*". Ominously, when asked whether public services could be subject to the GATS requirements if they were tendered or out-sourced, as is increasingly the case in the UK and elsewhere, Mr Clark acknowledged that "*they will fall under the coverage of the GATS obligations*" but made clear that this might only occur where a government had made specific offers in a particular sector, notably cultural and environmental services, so it would "*depend on the judgement of each WTO Member State*" which public sectors might be vulnerable to GATS obligations.

This uncertainty over whether public services will be entirely exempt from GATS is of real concern to local authorities. It could directly impact the ability of local authorities to stipulate domestic regulations regarding contracted services – regulations relating to, social protection, environmental and labour standards. In addition, it might constrain their ability to set procurement criteria regarding a contracted service, such as local sourcing of goods and labour and fair wages for producers. Negotiations on Domestic Regulatory Disciplines under Article VI.4 could imply that domestic regulations are seen as “unnecessary barriers to trade” through the WTO dispute resolution procedure, on the grounds that they are “more burdensome than necessary to ensure the quality of service” and fail to meet the criterion of ensuring “least trade restrictive” measures. Mr Clark indicated that the EC requests had recommended that countries protect their “right to regulate”. However, in practice, many of the least developed countries do not have such regulations established yet and will be unlikely to introduce them when faced with international pressure to keep their markets as open and unrestrictive as possible.

In July (2003) a European local and regional government advisory body known as the “Committee of the Regions” (CoR) met to elaborate a CoR Opinion paper relating to GATS. The Opinion makes certain recommendations, including ensuring that laws and statutes decreed by local authorities are respected as a principle of universal service provision in public services and where they support of “services of general interest” (“SGIs”) which are currently being negotiated in EU legislation.

‘WTO members still have time to take these concerns on board – in particular they need to tighten the definition of services so that Article I.3 clearly exempts

“public” services provision from GATS obligations with a definition that incorporates the tendering-out of a public service. The outcomes from the WTO’s Domestic Regulations working group discussions about the possible implications of GATS also need to be made widely available.” (Callway)

Korean cities and international trade

KLAFIR stands for Korea Local Authorities Foundation for International Relations. Based in Seoul, it has offices in Beijing, New York, Paris and Tokyo. In its newsletter (KLAFIR NEWS, volume 66, 2003 July), the following is typical of the news stories that appear in the section “Local Activities”:

“Changwon City Organizes Trade Delegation to North America.

A trade delegation visited the United States and Canada from June 2nd to the 12th and finalized contracts worth \$ 16,315 million. The delegation, composed of representatives from 7 local small and medium sized companies of auto parts and machinery, visited Chicago, Detroit and Toronto and held trade talks with 120 buyers. In close collaboration with KOTRA, the city provided assistance in selecting buyers, organizing venues and interpretation service. With the success of the trade delegation, the city has high hopes to introduce local products into the American market. In the future, Changwon City plans to promote economic exchange and friendly relationships with South American countries as well.

Located in the middle area of Gyeongsangnam province and the extreme southeast part of the Korean peninsula, Changwon City is the center of the machinery



Busan, Korea

industry connecting heavy machinery & chemical industry areas in Ulsan, Busan, Masan and Sacheon along the southeast coastal region."

Mayors from around the U.S. call on federal government to join them in their fight to reduce global warming (Press release October 21, 2003)

Washington, DC – Today, 155 Mayors from across the country, including members from both the US Conference of Mayors and the National League of Cities, issued the bipartisan “Mayors’ Statement on Global Warming”. In the Statement, the Mayors call on the federal government to join their cities’ efforts to reduce the threat of global warming.

The Statement comes one week before the US Senate takes an historic first vote on global warming legislation. This bi-partisan legislation, offered by Senators McCain and Lieberman, would take the first steps in setting up a system to begin to reduce global warming pollution.

“All levels of government in this country and around the world must work together to build a sustainable future,” said Mayor James Garner (R) of Hempstead, New York, President of the US Conference of Mayors. “This must be a bi-partisan urban, suburban and national effort.”

The Mayors who signed the Statement represent more than 46 million people in local communities ranging in size from 700 people in LaConner, Washington to more than four million in Houston, Texas. They are united by their cities’ commitment to act quickly to reverse effects of global warming on their constituents.

“Portland has been a leader in the fight against global warming for over a decade,” said Mayor Vera Katz (D) of Portland, Oregon. “We care about the health of the planet, and we recognize the opportunity to create new industries, jobs, and a better quality of life by building a sustainable economy.”

“In San Antonio we’ve added hybrid vehicles and bicycles to our fleet, and we’re working with other cities in our region to analyze and reduce energy use,” said Mayor Ed Garza (D) of San Antonio, Texas.

“I’m proud that my city has stabilized greenhouse gas emissions on the way to our 20% carbon reduction goal,” said Mayor R.T. Rybak of Minneapolis, Minnesota.

“As Mayor of Houston, I’ve prioritized environmental matters affecting families in our region. Protecting citizens from the impact of continued global warming has been a great concern of this administration and we’ve worked to address the issue thoroughly,” said Mayor Lee P. Brown of Houston, Texas.

“To secure an independent energy future, we must generate electrical power from emission free renewable energy sources, such as solar power,” said Mayor Dick Murphy (R) of San Diego, California. “It is one of my top ten goals for San Diego. It is good for our national security, our economic security and most importantly, our environmental security.”

The Mayors cite energy security and accountability as leaders as the chief reasons for issuing the Statement, Easing dependence on foreign oil by increasing the use of alternative fuel such as wind improves local air quality and public health while reducing global warming.

In the U.S., 148 local governments participate in the Cities for Climate Protection Campaign, a program of ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability.



Local energy – global emissions



Global warming – local action in Australia

The Kyoto Protocol is a prime example of global targets being tackled locally, because even if the national or federal government has not signed the document, as is the case in the US and Australia, cities have understood that it is their own interest to curb greenhouse gas emissions and take energy saving measures. ICLEI's Cities for Climate Protection Campaign™ (CCP™) currently embraces 550 participating cities worldwide that together account for 5% of the total global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

Recent numbers from Australia show that the campaign has 150 participating cities, covering 61% of the population. From 1999 to 2001 these cities saved more than 1,233,000 tonnes of CO₂-equivalent, and invested more than \$2,683,000 in GHG-related jobs. In the following two years, 2001 – 2002, the savings were over 664,000 tonnes of CO₂-equivalent, and investments in GHG-related jobs amounted to \$ 939,000 (savings in Australian dollars).

Sustainable procurement of public services and products

When purchasing products and services, public authorities use taxpayers' money "at all levels", be they local, national, regional or global. Sustainable public procurement is a great illustration of how cities can set an example, do research, and join forces to act together towards common global goals.

Just by switching to green electricity, EU public administrations can reduce greenhouse gas emissions amounting to 18% of the EU Kyoto obligations, providing

the market responds to the increased demand for renewable electricity by increasing capacity. This is one of the results of the European research project RELIEF, co-ordinated by ICLEI's Sustainable Procurement team, and supported by the European Commission. The project, which brings together seven research institutes and six local authorities from across Europe, was set up in 2001. It was designed to provide a scientific basis for the development of the concept of green purchasing. The findings prove that sustainable procurement is not just a symbolic activity, with marginal practical effects, but can have a significant impact. For example, switching to organic food in public purchasing for canteens and catering would compensate the nutrification impact on European soils and waters of more than 2.2 million inhabitants. Moreover, the increase in demand for green products would help to improve the competitiveness of suppliers on the private market, and the example set by public authorities can also assist in changing consumer behaviour. Again, an illustration of this comes from the fields of IT equipment following the announcement by the US Federal government in 1993 that only EnergyStar certified computers would be bought. Today, all computers sold around the world meet these requirements. According to the calculations made by the RELIEF project, this has already resulted in greenhouse gas reductions equivalent to around 1,000,000 inhabitants. If the next generation of energy-efficient computers were to be supported in a similar way, another 982,000 person equivalents could be avoided, in Europe alone. (A "person equivalent is calculated by dividing total emissions of a substance from a given geographic area, for example Europe, by that area's population. This gives the average "emission" per person, which can then be compared with the reductions generated by green purchasing. (Ochoa))

Environmental demands on purchasing in Gothenburg, Sweden

In Sweden, the sum spent on procurement within public sector amounts to 400 billion kroner a year. In the Nordic countries, a great deal of the procurement is handled by local authorities, who are in an excellent position to encourage suppliers to offer more environmentally compatible goods and services.

The City of Gothenburg is one of the most industrialised municipalities in Sweden with about 450,000 inhabitants, and 750,000 in the region. The City's local politicians understood the potential of centrally controlled procurement, which would use environmental criteria. The development of procurement procedures began in 1989 with a thorough survey of legislation and regulations relevant for public procurement. In 1990, the City Council made a unanimous decision to oblige the City Committees, Boards and companies to include an environmental assessment every time a decision was made to purchase something. The former Procurement Authority was assigned the task of developing a model for environmentally aware purchasing. This model, based on political decisions, established working methods and an information strategy, has now been put into practice. All suppliers who submit tenders to the City of Gothenburg must provide an environmental declaration and each procurement is subject to an environmental assessment. Special project teams consisting of purchasers, users, suppliers, etc., develop environmentally optimised well functioning products and services. National Guidelines for sustainable procurement have also been set up. The benefits for the environment mean benefits for the administration. Co-ordination of transports reduced the number of deliveries and so lowered prices.

Environmentally friendly limited assortment led to less demand for storage, which also lowered the prices. The number of suppliers was reduced, so the order processing became more effective. This meant that the number of invoices in turn reduced leading to less administration work and lower prices. The model also includes collaboration with suppliers during the contract period, while joint committees set up projects together with suppliers to develop their products or find solutions that open up new routes to a healthier environment. The projects are often incorporated in the agreements and have included the reuse of packaging and products, as well as the arranging of transports of different product groups from different suppliers to be delivered in the same consignment. In this way, Gothenburg also gives small and medium-sized companies a chance to be a supplier to the city. (Parkbring)

Strategic urban sustainability management in Växjö, Sweden

The Municipality of Växjö in Sweden has significant experience in the Local Agenda 21 process and is also deeply engaged in climate protection and water protection. To take the environmental work one step further, the municipality decided to implement an environmental management system, namely *ecoBUDGET*, which is specifically developed for political organisations.

The system includes the environmental work both within the municipal organisation and the municipality as a geographical area. The principal aim of *ecoBUDGET* is to manage natural resources with the same efficiency as financial resources. *ecoBUDGET* is a system which in

conformity with other environmental management systems strives for continuous improvements.

With *eco*BUDGET, the traditional financial accounting system is complemented with an environmental accounting system, in which physical quantities are measured instead of money. A year with *eco*BUDGET has three phases; to prepare an environmental budget, to implement planned measures to achieve the budget and, thirdly, to balance the environmental annual accounts.

At the end of the budget year a budget balance is drawn up. The budget balance shows the actual environmental pressure compared to the planned pressure in the budget. The budget balance is complemented by a set of indicators representing the status and development in the environmental resources selected. It is called the statement of environmental assets. Finally, the environmental benefit analysis is added to the budget balance, in which the use of environmental resources is connected to the human needs. The more the human needs are fulfilled per environmental use the better. These measures connect the environmental, financial and social aspect of sustainable development. (Israelsson and Hermansson)

Financing water for all requires good local governance

The first and foremost of the Millennium Development Goals, namely securing access to freshwater for 1.2 billion people, means that huge amounts of money will be needed for infrastructure, provision of services and capacity building. “Privatizing water” is no longer the magic solution, particularly in view of the substantial losses

incurred by the few remaining water multinationals as a result of currency exchange problems and misjudged investments. These companies cannot go to the banks any more to borrow money. Instead, they are now telling cities that before they can help, the cities first have to secure their own funding. This became very clear in the Financing session of the Water and Cities Day in Osaka during the 3rd World Water Forum in early 2003.

Should all cities now get direct access to international money markets? In most cases this would mean that cities would bypass national governments which, being responsible for the national debt burden, don't want cities to borrow on their own and add to that debt.

Having Moody's or Standard & Poor's give a credit rating is far too costly and complicated for most cities, which are anyway not constantly looking for loans. In some cases, the right to collect taxes or fees serves as a guarantee for loans from international financing markets, instead of collateral, or instead of a state government guarantee. Cities with a reliable performance may also issue bonds. Alternatively, in order to reduce money transfer costs, smaller municipalities can join forces and liaise in pools when entering money markets.

All of this spells *good local governance*. But in order to get funding, local governments must get their act together first: they must increase transparency by opening their books, and they must have their governance structures and procedures in place! They also need management capacities to bring their service delivery up to a level where it brings revenue, as well.



Privatisation of water: Dutch covenant for water projects in developing countries

“The Dutch minister for development cooperation, Agnes van Ardenne, plans to draw up a covenant with the Dutch water sector. If Dutch companies want to get involved in water projects in developing countries, Van Ardenne can reach agreements with developing countries on embedding the projects in *local government*, policy and legislation. An important element of the covenant would be informing both sides on the progress of projects. As part of the Partners for Water programme, two pilot projects will be implemented in Indonesia once the required EUR 14 million investment has been secured. Van Ardenne believes the pilot projects will be a good case study for the dialogue on public-private partnerships in the water sector, which she announced at the 3rd World Water Forum in Mar 2003.” (E-mail newsletter from Yvonne van Hees, Spokesperson for minister Van Ardenne, <mailto:yvonne-van.hees@minbuza.nl>)

Corporate citizenship meets local government – linking to The United Nations Global Compact in Melbourne, Australia

Before one of the many sessions during the WSSD in Johannesburg, the President of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, Mr Björn Stigson, introduced me to Ms Carla Fiorina, the CEO of Hewlett Packard, by saying, “These people are our best allies!”

The business community always stresses how important a partner Local Government is for them, and it’s true that companies need good local governance. Not having clear procedures can encourage corruption, which

takes up time and money. Industry needs a reliable infrastructure, water, energy and mobility, housing for employees, health care and education for families.

Multinationals also have to deal with local conditions, be they social, environmental or economic. The concept of corporate citizenship has been introduced, and a group of businesses that acknowledge their role as stakeholders in a wider public domain have joined in the United Nations Global Compact, which was launched in June 2000. According to its Executive Head, Georg Kell, the Compact aims at making the process of globalisation more inclusive and, consequently, less fragile. As Tom Donaldson puts it, “the very name Global Compact suggests a hypothetical, implicit, social contract”.

The City of Melbourne has created a link to the Global Compact by establishing a Cities Program, the Melbourne Model. “By 2010 over 50% of the world population will be living in cities. Urban populations are facing increasingly complex economic, social and environmental issues. It is proposed that the Cities Programme be developed as an effective mechanism with which to develop blueprint solutions to tackle seemingly intractable urban problems. It is further proposed that the Melbourne Model be considered as a framework for the Cities Program within which business, local government and civil society combine resources to identify and respond to issues that: a) directly impact on all three groups, and b) can only be resolved by gaining direct input from all three sectors. Once proven to be effective in the city of origin, project solutions will be made available to other international cities facing similar issues by way of the Global Compact International Learning Forum.”
(David Teller, Committee for Melbourne)

The Melbourne Model makes use of existing mechanisms and tools, such as Triple Bottom Line (TBL)



indicators, stakeholder participation, Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) and the Melbourne Principles for Sustainable Cities that lists ten urban-related social, economic, environmental and cultural value propositions. The principles are the product of an international UNEP workshop that was held in Melbourne. Melbourne lists three projects as initial examples:

- Debt cycle prevention (social/economic)
- Zero net emissions by 2020 (environmental)
- Water campaign (environmental/economic)

North – South – East – West – international municipal co-operation and the role of associations

Peter Knip, the Director of VNG International (International Co-operation Agency of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities) gave me the first annual report (2002) of his agency when we met in Cameroon. In his preface, Peter describes the issues extremely poignantly:

“Will democracy gain sufficient confidence worldwide to fulfil the expectations? Will the impressive democratic reform in all former Central and Eastern European countries prove sustainable? Will the Afghan and Iraqi people succeed in building democratic countries, after many years of dictatorship, war and deeply rooted corruption? Will representative democracy as the model for society appeal to the millions of poor people in undemocratic countries in our world?”

“I believe in representative democracy. I believe in responsible citizens who choose their own leaders to take well-balanced decisions; in political leaders who are

accountable to their constituency; in governments that act in the interest of their citizens; that invest in the development of their communities and societies. But we must accept, these things are often very difficult to realise. – Local government is the delivery room for a representative democracy. That is the level where direction is given to the community and where young people learn rules and values. That is where politicians learn to represent their voters and the meaning of leadership. ... local governments consolidate, renew and reinvent the meaning of representative democracy every day.”

“Therefore, I am very enthusiastic about increasing capacity made available by local government associations in countries with a long democratic tradition, to use their expertise and experience in support of building strong democratic local governments in other countries in the world. It is the practical and deep understanding of the subject that makes international assistance to local governments by associations of municipalities very valuable. Co-operation offers access to networks that provide governments in young democracies with indispensable exchange of knowledge and experience.”

Over the past years, professional agencies for international municipal assistance and cooperation have been developed by local government associations in Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the UK. In Finland, the association does not have a specific agency but the North-South Local Authority Co-operation Programme launched by the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities promotes international, municipal co-operation. This enables exchange of knowledge, skills, and expertise, along with concrete development activities to improve basic services. It also builds direct networks between municipal civil

servants, elected officials, different departments, schools and libraries.

In this Finnish programme, co-operation is initiated by the municipalities themselves. The programme is funded by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. The total amount of funding is 1.17 million euros for a period of two years (2002–2004). Each municipal partnership is allowed a maximum of 84,000 euros annually. The twinned municipalities – some of them really small rural towns – of the (Finnish) programme are: Hauho, Hartola and Janakkala with Iramba District, Tanzania; Lahti with Bojanala Platinum District, South Africa; Salo with Mbabane, Swaziland; Tampere with Mwanza, Tanzania; Vaasa with Morogoro, Tanzania; and Vantaa with Windhoek, Namibia. The co-ordinator of the programme is Heli Liikkanen, from the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities.

Further steps:

Questions to International Institutions, Parliamentarians and Local and National Governments, and All levels

International institutions

- Do you have an official policy for your Civil Society relationships?
- What kind of status has the Civil Society / Stakeholder relations office in your organisation?
- Within that policy framework, what is the position and role of the local authorities?
 - are they a CSO, an NGO, a Major Group, a sphere of government, or something else?
 - how does the role of local authorities compare to that of business and trade, private companies, or international NGOs such as the WWF and the Red Cross?
- How are the local governments represented in your governing bodies? Do they have a right to attend, to participate and speak, and to vote? Do they have access to and a right to participate in the drafting process of agreements?
- What kind of plans or projects are in progress in order to develop the institutional role of Civil Society within your organisation? How are civil society representatives involved in that development process?

- Which are the “benchmark organisations” that you look up to as vanguard leaders in Civil Society participation, in particular regarding the participation of the local level?
- Will you be following the recommendations of the Cardoso Panel?

Parliamentarians

- What is the status of Local / Sub-sovereign Government in your constitution?
- Which legal instruments have been ratified to ensure that local authorities have adequate fiscal instruments and financial resources to provide basic services for their citizens?
- Which legal instruments have been ratified to ensure that local authorities have adequate governance capacity to provide for transparency, efficiency, accountability, equity and participation in municipal management?
- Do you consider local authorities as one of your key constituencies?
- If yes, how do you communicate with them?

National governments

- Do your ministries – all of them – have a good working relationship with representatives of local authorities? Do you have them as permanent advisers in your committees?
- Do your ministries ask for comments from local authorities, even in issues which, at the first sight, seem to have no “local-level” dimension?

- When the ministries set up working groups to prepare for, or delegations to participate in multilateral negotiations, do they always consult and include representatives of local authorities?
- After multilateral agreements have been ratified by your government, how do you inform local governments and other civil society representatives about their implications and implementation?
- Do you actively follow the work of the Cardoso Panel and discuss its eventual implications to your country?
- What does “Participation of all stakeholders” mean in the daily work of your ministry?
- Does your ministry have guidelines about Civil Society participation?

Local governments

- Do you have a mechanism – maybe through national, regional or international local government associations – to keep abreast with the substance of ongoing multilateral negotiation processes? Can you feed in your input, is it taken seriously, and are you informed about the outcomes of negotiations?
- Are you aware of your obligations and/or opportunities to implement global agendas?
- How do you develop the mechanisms and find the resources to implement global agendas at the local level? What kind of support do you get from your central government?
- How do you inform your citizens and how do you allow for their participation in the municipal decision-making processes?
- What does “Participation of all stakeholders” mean in the daily work of your municipality?

- Do you have a network or institutionalised connections through which you can get your voice heard in the ministries of your country? Do they take you and your concerns seriously?
- Do you inform your ministries about your efforts and achievements in implementing the global sustainability agendas? For instance, the MDGs, such as access to freshwater and sanitation, or climate protection and local agenda.

At all levels

- In your institution – agency, ministry, parliament, city, etc – have you secured mechanisms that make your procurement activities sustainable?
- Is there a political will and has a formal decision been taken about shifting to sustainable procurement?
- Do your staff who are in charge of purchasing products and services know what sustainable procurement means?
- Do your personnel also understand why sustainable procurement makes sense?

Conclusions

More participation can mean more anarchy; too many voices where all messages disappear into a chaos of noise. This happened in the infamous multi-stakeholder dialogue in Kyoto, during 3rd World Water Forum. Organising more such kindergartens, as the International Herald Tribune put it, would end up in further marginalization of the voice of Civil Society at large, at least in multilateral meetings.

More globalisation, however, by definition means a stronger influence of multinational trade and companies, which need not come to the negotiation tables in order to get heard. Governments – and local governments – are always keen to hear, what investors, employers, taxpayers and real estate owners have in mind.

Until now it has seemed as if the Civil Society has had no weapons in its hands. Throwing stones and breaking windows only brings photo opportunities but no real power. It has been up to the good will of the nation states to let the 'NGOs' have their little performance and leave the room.

Civil Society has many faces. Civil Society is not the same as NGOs. The traditional divides of public-private and governmental-non-governmental don't explain the world any more. Public services get privatised, publicly owned utilities have to perform and compete with private companies, public procurement is strictly regulated. Today, the non-national-governmental sphere includes partners that are accountable equally to the citizens and to governments: local governments, for instance. We have to agree on a common language when we speak about the stakeholders outside of national

governments. Agreeing on the terminology is not splitting hairs about words. Consensus on meaning will have far-reaching consequences on our institutions and participatory governance processes.

Globalisation has physical limits. The International Style in the early 20th century, as the ideology of Functionalism was called in Northern America, became one of the first victims of the misguided idea that construction methods and buildings could be the same all over the world. Climate, culture, methods of maintenance, social and behavioural patterns, availability of materials, infrastructure, quality of labour, standards of governance – all are contextually determined and thus not universal. As the CEO of Shell said in Johannesburg, Shell may be a multinational company but at the same time it is a network of a huge number of local companies that have to take the local conditions carefully into account. The local voice has to get heard in the headquarters. We have to develop different mechanisms, processes and structures how to negotiate new deals.

I wonder if you can you show me a country with a well-functioning local self-government, one which at the same time also faces extraordinary problems of the economy and the environment, and major challenges of health and employment. I believe you may find it difficult. For there seems to be an invisible link connecting a tradition of good local governance and a high standard of living secured by a welfare state, equal opportunities among men and women, a high standard of education and health care, and a transparent society. If there really is an established link, those countries that have positive

experiences in local self-government – constitutional and regulatory legal framework, decision-making processes, access to information, information systems, role of the public domain, implementation of sustainability agendas, to list some examples – could regard this know-how as one of their most valuable export goods, one which they should be selling and sharing.

Annexes

List of acronyms

- AMCOW African Ministers Council on Water
- CCP™ Cities for Climate Protection Campaign™ of ICLEI
- CSD Commission on Sustainable Development, under Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) at the UN in New York
- CSOs civil society organisations (compare NGOs)
- CO₂ carbon dioxide
- EUWI European Union Water Initiative
- G8 Group of eight industrialized countries
- G77 Group of originally 77 developing countries,
- GATS General Agreement on Trade in Services (1994)
- GATT General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (1947...1993)
- GHG greenhouse gas(es)
- GPA Plurilateral Agreement on Government Procurement (1981, 1994), includes national and local government entities
- GWP Global Water Partnership (www.gwpforum.org)
- IMF International Monetary Fund
- IUCN The World Conservation Union (www.iucn.org)
- IWRM Integrated water resources management
- JPoI Johannesburg Plan of Implementation
- LA21 Local Agenda 21 (the localized version of Agenda 21)
- MDGs Millenium Development Goals
- NEPAD New Partnership for Africa's Development
- NGOs non-governmental organisations (compare CSOs)
- OECD Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
- TRIPS Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (1994)
- UNCED United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the Rio "Earth Summit" 1992
- UNDP United Nations Development Programme
- UNEP United Nations Environment Programme
- UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
- UN-Habitat United Nations Human Settlements Programme, www.un-habitat.org
- WSSD World Summit on Sustainable Development, the UN Summit in Johannesburg 2002 (Rio+10)
- WTO World Trade Organisation (1995)
- WWF World Wide Fund for Nature

Worldwide and regional local government associations (by no means comprehensive, includes no national associations)

Worldwide

- ATO, www.ato.net Arab Towns Organization
- (Cities Alliance – financing link between the World Bank, UN-Habitat and some local government associations)
- FMCU/UTO, www.fmcu-uto.org Fédération Mondiale des Cités Unies – World Federation of United Cities, active in four regions: Africa, Latin America, Europe and NIS, and Mediterranean
- Citynet, www.citynet-ap.org
- Healthy Cities of WHO, a project-based network
- ICLEI, www.iclei.org Local Governments for Sustainability (formerly The International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives), a local government membership association, founded 1990
- IULA, International Union of Local Authorities, founded in 1913, with seven regional sections, www.iula.org: AULA (Africa), IULA-ASPAC (Asia-Pacific), IULA-EMME (Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East), CEMR (Europe), FLACMA-CELCADEL (Latin America), IULA-North America, FEMICA (Federation of Municipalities of the Isthmus of Central America)
- Metropolis, www.metropolis.org World Association of the major metropolises
- OICC, www.oicc.org Organization of Islamic Capitals and Cities
- WACLAC, www.waclac.org World Association of Cities and Local Authorities Coordination (lists as its active members IULA, UTO, ATO, OICC, Metropolis), an umbrella organisation, which has facilitated the unification of IULA and FMCU/UTO into WOUGLG; still unclear what happens to WACLAC after the unification
- WOUGLG World Organisation of United Cities and Local Governments, new organisation to start in 2004, result of a merger of IULA and FMCU-UTO at the global level (no website, yet)
- UNACLA United Nations Advisory Council for Local Authorities; not a local government membership association but a committee, consisting of about 15 persons representing local government associations (WACLAC, IULA, FMCU/UTO, Metropolis, Eurocities, ATO etc) or cities (Venice), who are invited to be members of UNACLA by the Executive Director of UN-Habitat (no mention on the present UN-Habitat website)

Europe

- CEMR Council of European Municipalities and Regions (European section of IULA)
- CLRAE Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe
- Energy-Cités
- ESCTC European Sustainable Cities and Towns Campaign (“The EU-Campaign”, which in fact is a coordination body of ten European city networks, located in Brussels)
- Eurocities

Asia-Pacific, South-East Asia

- IULA-ASPAC
- KLAFIR Korea Local Authorities Foundation for International Relations

Latin America

- FLACMA-CELCADEL (IULA-Latin America and the Caribbean)

Africa

- AULA (IULA-Africa)
- PDM-MDP Municipal Development Partnership
www.pdm-net.org
- SALGA South African Local Government Association and other national organizations
- CCRA Council of Communes and Regions in Africa, created 2000, similar to the model of CEMR in Europe, to coordinate three continental organisations: AULA, UCCLA and UAT. From 2003 onwards, the CCRA is supposed to become the unified organisation of local authorities at Pan-African level, i.e. the regional section of UCLG.

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