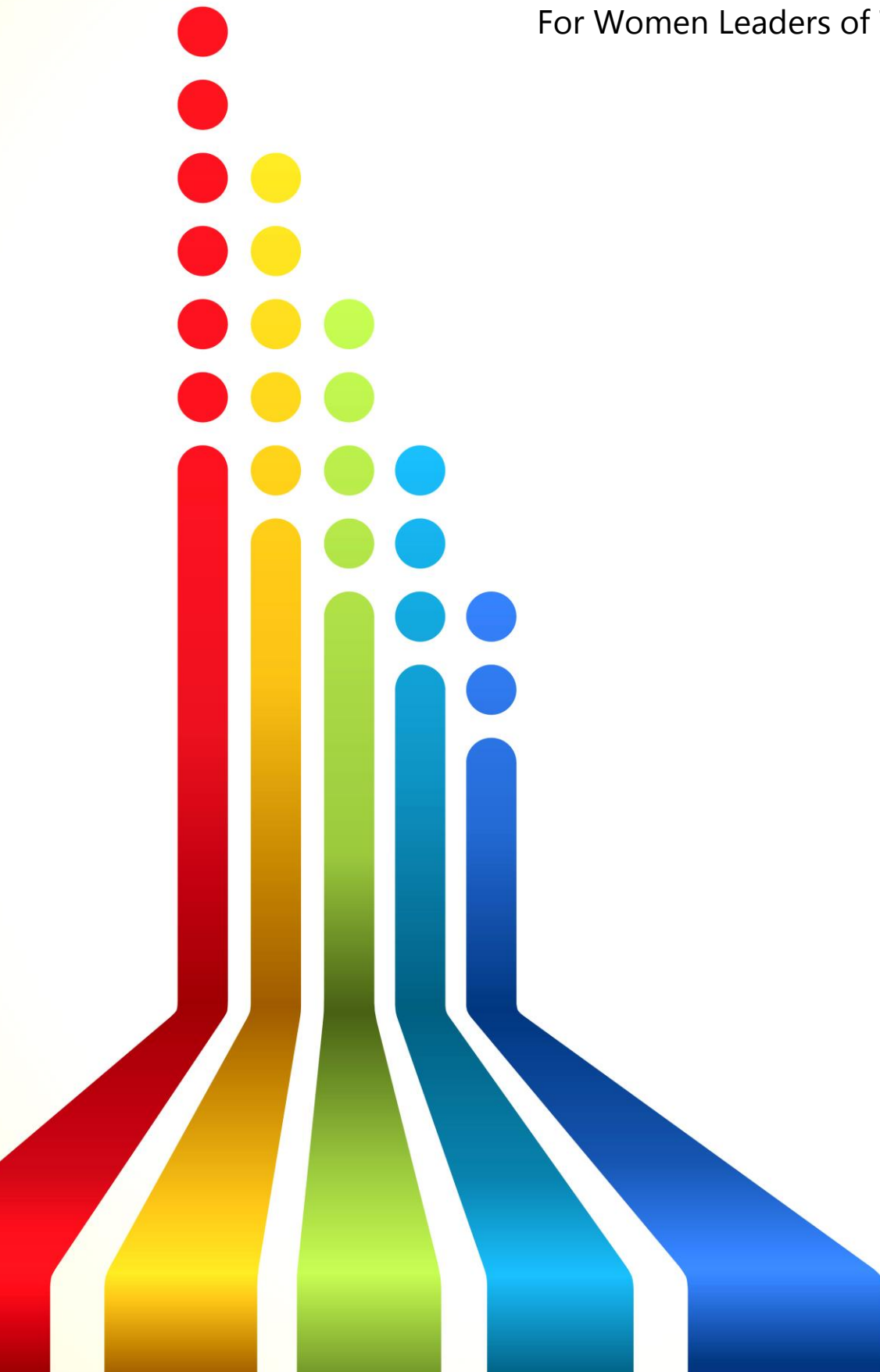


Strengthening Women's Local Public Leadership

For Women Leaders of Today and Tomorrow



1. Background and Objectives. Urbanization is one of the defining features of the 20th and 21st centuries. From 1950 to 2011 the world experienced an almost five-fold increase in the global urban population from 0.75 to 3.63 billion. Simultaneously, there has been a trend towards decentralized governance, planning, and budgeting, with a number of opportunities arising for local stakeholders in urban, peri-urban areas to participate in decision-making that impacts their daily lives. These factors can be incredible sources of development, empowerment and prosperity but without leadership to harness such potential, poverty, slum formation, widening inequalities, pollution and other issues arise.

The Huairou Commission, UN Women, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), and UN Habitat believe that leadership is essential for sustained transformation at the local level amidst the jostling, competing, and oft times contradicting jurisdictions of the private sector, civil society, and different government structures. Leadership requires coalitions of actors and groups to address governance issues arising in diverse urban, peri-urban and rural areas, and necessitates stronger linkages between these communities to harness urbanization and decentralized resources as a source of development and empowerment.

Women specifically have a role in leading change in their cities. Their different approaches to governance have been defined as a version of transformative leadership, a framework within which power is used to create change and develop people and communities in non-hierarchical, inclusive and participatory manners that prioritize disadvantaged sectors. Today, the countries with the highest proportion of women mayors include Mauritius (40%), New Zealand (26%), Serbia (26%), and Latvia (25%) and with 500 women mayors and vice-mayors, China holds the record for the country with the most women mayors.

It is important however to consider leadership as a polycentric concept – women leaders are not only those who are formally elected, but also community leaders, those within grassroots organizations, the private sector, trade unions, and others. Collaborative leadership across neighborhoods, communities, and spheres of activity at the local level is thus essential for sustained change. This new concept of leadership requires different individual competencies of the women leaders themselves, as well as improved platforms at the local, national, and global levels to foster learning and dialogue.

The Huairou Commission, UN Women, UCLG, and UN-Habitat are thus proposing a new joint programme to strengthen and develop women’s polycentric leadership at the local level. This programme represents the first time the four organizations have collaborated and brought to bear their combined the knowledge, experience, networks, and comparative advantages with the aim to support women in leading change in their cities, towns. The specific objectives of the programme are:

- Improved collaborative leadership capacities of women in local government, civil society, grassroots, private sector, trade unions, and academia.
- Enhanced meaningful participation of women in decision-making at the local level and leadership at all levels (local, national, regional and global);
- Improved access to and delivery of local services, urban planning and management;
- Increased advocacy for effective women’s leadership and documentation of good practices on women’s leadership and gender-responsive local governance.

2. Programme Strategy and Results. The programme will work at the local, national, and global levels so as to achieve its objectives. 10-15 urban, peri-urban, and rural sites will be selected across Latin America, Africa and Asia. In each of these sites, women leaders from across sectors and local and national levels will be provided with access to cutting-edge capacity development opportunities focusing on collaborative leadership competencies such as safeguarding, process, facilitate interaction and consensus across disciplines and thematic areas, negotiation, preventing and mitigating conflict, vision setting and others. The capacity development methodology will be provided through local training institutions, thereby ensuring sustainability of the learning programme. From these networks the dense web of interpersonal connections and partnerships necessary for collaborative leadership will start to form. The women leaders will also be provided with knowledge on local, national, regional and international gender-responsive policy commitments, and issues such as the local and national law and regulation making process/

Initiatives in each site targeting the local level issues such urban planning and management, women's access to, use of, and control of land and housing, quality of and access to basic services, and community resilience building and climate change adaptation will provide the vehicle through which the leadership knowledge and skills of the women's coalitions are turned into competencies and tangible development results. These initiatives will be the proving ground for the new approach to leadership and will be designed to strengthen formal governance processes and improve the access of women to decisions making and control of resources.

A platform will be developed to ensure that the women leader coalitions in the different sites have an opportunity to engage and share lessons learned with each other. Further a partnership and advocacy strategy targeting global policy spaces and linking the global to the grassroots will be established to advance women's public leadership and gender-responsive decentralization strategies and raise the visibility of women's collaborative leadership and the results it can achieve. The programme is designed to explicitly connect the local and international levels. International agreements, declarations, and commitments will inform the activities, particularly the capacity development initiatives for women leaders. Key priorities are articulated in the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Beijing Platform of Action, the Habitat Agenda, the Millennium Development Goals. The programme also aligns with the mandate to localize the post-2015 development agenda, and will take into account the ongoing debates around the Sustainable Development Goals. The expected results of the Programme include the following:

- **Capacity building and Leadership:** Women leaders across sectors have strengthened collaborative leadership competencies and are educated on gender-responsive local governance, planning and budgeting, as well as local/decentralized resources and policies.
- **Gender-responsive local development and service delivery:** Increased local government responsiveness and accountability towards citizens, particularly women and girls, by enhancing their technical capacities to deliver gender-responsive services. Opportunities created to increase fiscal space at the local level and/or attract more resources and recognition from national/regional governments and international institutions, enabling partnership and development strategies to be scaled up. Evidence-base on partnership strategies utilizing decentralized resources and decision-making established and disseminated.

- **Partnerships and Advocacy Mechanisms** At all levels (local, national, regional and international) partnerships between grassroots women and locally elected women leaders will be strengthened. A multi-stakeholder global partnership to support women’s leadership will be established.

3. The Strength of the Partnership. Never before has the combined expertise and knowledge of the Huairou Commission, UN-Habitat, UCLG, and UN Women been brought together in one programme. The partners are well-positioned to facilitate engagement among diverse constituencies and negotiate partnerships that are often challenging to build and maintain, and each has extensive experience and knowledge that they will utilize for the benefit of the programme. Assets include the Huairou Commission’s Participatory Governance tools and expertise, and extensive network of organized grassroots women leaders; UCLG’s gender equality work and networks of elected women, as well as global reach and influence through the Global Task Force of Regional and Local Authorities; UN-Habitat’s experience in urban planning and municipal financing and local elected leadership, and UN Women’s work in the area of gender-responsive planning and budgeting and women’s participation in decision making at the local level. The combined political capital of these organizations has tremendous potential to influence a wide range of decision makers, and for the first time, the concept of women’s leadership at the local level can be addressed holistically.

4. Proposed Budget. The proposed budget for the 4 year programme is USD 9.5million. USD 7.5million is allocated to programme activities including the capacity development and up to 15 pilot projects across the globe. A further USD 1million will be dedicated to the network, documentation of learning and results, evaluation, and advocacy activities. USD 1million will be allocated to programme operationalization and management over the course of four years. It is likely that this Programme will be funded by multiple partners, including cities themselves.

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