

Strategic Development of Cities Alliance

This document is the result of the fact that long term Members of the Cities Alliance (CA) have during the last years suggested a number of changes and improvements in CA priorities, criteria, advocacy activities and other areas. These suggestions have been presented in connection with annual revisions of the Medium Term Strategy (MTS), meetings of the Consultative Board (CB) and other occasions.

Global changes, change of donor focus and priorities and lessons learned from CA's 10 years of work justify a continuous development of the organisation. With the intention to clarify and strengthen CA's role and mandate and to enhance its value added in the context of addressing urban poverty, urban slum and urban development a number of donors to CA informally meet in Nanjing. Representatives from Sweden, Norway, Germany, United Kingdom and the World Bank participated.

It was noted that donor suggestions in the last years have resulted in some changes of the MTS, but other issues have not yet lead to adequate and concrete measures. Transaction costs for core operations also seem to be high. There are obviously different reasons for this, e.g. need for further development of the suggestions and limited administrative resources of the Secretariat.

The following suggestions to CA, was discussed without internal ranking:

- 1) **Stronger focus on poor countries.** Increased focus on low income countries, in accordance with the OECD Development Cooperation Directorate, Development Assistance Committee's list of countries eligible for Official Development Assistance, the ODA DAC list.
- 2) **Focus on secondary and tertiary cities.** Increased focus on secondary and tertiary cities, in order not to let CA's portfolio be dominated by national and mega city initiatives.
- 3) **Preference for cities as project owners.** Statement of clear CA preference for strengthened project ownership by cities.
- 4) **Strengthen representation of cities.** Development of new organisational forms for cities in developing countries to be both indirectly and directly represented in CA, in order to make CA an alliance not only for cities, but also of cities. Ease the access of cities to the CA.

- 5) **Establish CA presence in Europe.** Establish CA presence in Europe, in order to advocate on urban development issues and to cooperate and network with European donors, institutions and organisations.
- 6) **Support civil society and private sector participation.** Concrete action to strengthen and support civil society and private sector CA's work as well as in strategies and programmes, with the intention to improve transparency and mobilise local initiatives.
- 7) **Criteria for environment, climate, social, gender, local governance and investment linkage.** Introduction of eligibility criteria for assessment of CDS and SU applications, requirements regarding definition of measurable objectives, measurable indicators and milestones in project applications and reporting, application in assessments and evaluations in accordance with relevance.
- 8) **Improve CA monitoring and introduce result based management..** Improved quality and scope of CA monitoring at all stages, from assessments of applications to ex post evaluations, including the development of annual work plans and annual reports relating to these work plans.
- 9) **Permanent staff on key positions, lean and transparent administrative structures.** Key positions of the Secretariat's duties to be staffed by permanent employees instead of secondments.
- 10) **Define and concretize advocacy.** Definition of CA's role and mandate on advocacy of urban development, knowledge sharing, information, networking and other measures.

It was suggested that a working group be initiated in close cooperation with the secretariat. The aim is to develop a report on possible reforms to be discussed at the CG meeting in Barcelona. Sweden will prepare notes from the meeting to be distributed to the group and CA secretariat and will set the framework for the initiation of the working group in december 2008.