

## Suggestions and Comments of UCLG for the Mumbai CG meeting on the document : Updating Mid term Strategy Cities Alliance (Barcelona 11.1.2010)

The Cities Alliance Medium Term Strategy that was designed in 2008 had 4 objectives:

1. *Systematically increasing the ownership and leadership of cities and countries;*
2. *Raising the profile of cities, and of slums;*
3. *Increasing the depth and breadth of Cities Alliance members' involvement; and*
4. *Continually improving the management of the Cities Alliance work programme.*

The revision of the MTS of January 2010 was summarized in 7 recommendations:

1. *That the Consultative Group of the Cities Alliance reaffirm the Charter, and the overall direction of the Medium Term Strategy;*
2. *That the organization focuses on the development of comprehensive, longer-term and strategic development programmes with a limited number of countries, according to the capacity of the organization as a whole;*
3. *The Consultative Group agrees to restrict the scope and budget of the Grant-making facility, replacing it with a competitive call for proposals aimed at catalyzing possible future country programmes ;*
4. *That knowledge activities will focus on improving collective know-how through, inter alia, joint work programmes on core CA business (SU and CDS) and related priorities and emerging issues such as the environment, cities and climate change, etc.*
5. *That the results-based management framework, and the knowledge activities of the Cities Alliance, are also aligned with the country programmes, as appropriate, and*
6. *That advocacy activities focus primarily at the country level, but also retain a global function; and*
7. *That the CG agrees to implement these changes with some urgency, while allowing for an appropriate transition period.*

### **UCLG comments:**

We agree on the points made on the changing context (terrain) and the increasing catalytic role of Cities Alliance. However, we would like to remind that the point 1 of the MTS, related to the ownership of cities, requires more attention.

In line with the MTS suggestion of 2008 of greater client execution, the main driver and actor to coordinate and call for support should be cities and mayors. We propose discussing the first objective and revising the adjusted work plan along the demand of cities.

### **1 . Proposed adjustment of the business model – more multi-level, less countries, who is driving the change process?**

- As a modality, we agree on revising the grant facility towards more catalytic action, but we suggest conditioning these actions to ensure a stronger lead by cities
- Greater support to low-income countries means weaker partners in ministries and cities: city partnerships can help here. They require more time and less resources. CA should consider awarding possible funding, for example involving associations or networks of cities enabling cost recovery and following flexible time frames.
- Local actors need more guidance on elaboration and implementation of policies, to participate actively in national dialogues on urban development, governance.

- In a multi-level approach it is crucial to address and help to revise financing schemes and modalities for urban development. In LDCs this means envisaging greater international investment and grants related to SU and urban development .
- South-South partnership allow for better understanding of limitations on times and resources. It is important to learn from the history of decentralized cooperation: these kinds of initiatives should be under an umbrella of networks or associations, so that lessons are properly followed up and reinventing the wheel avoided.

**2. It is crucial to invest in enabling cities to drive change at local and country level (help to build a coalition of cities at country level to lead change)**

- Many cities in LDC are mainly concerned about implementation and provision of services and infrastructure, and external support for improving their planning is positively impacting on a better use of resources.
- The abilities of cities to manage projects and programs need to be built up and longer term support can cover the different steps. The preparatory grant agreement, as made with Lilongwe or the LGAs in Namibia or Mozambique, helps to keep momentum and is a good and flexible modality that allows city networks or associations to prepare for more long-term cooperation.
- It is crucial to support local processes and leaders, greater flexibility in areas for cooperation allows the CA grants to respond to local needs and processes.

**3. It is positive to revise the Portfolio and Grant and support modalities to enable cities to access grants**

- The number and diversity of the proposals is difficult to manage for the secretariat. We agree that country focus and possible follow-up funding can help. We suggest prioritizing grants led by cities, as this adds an important perspective to the CA member programs that are usually developed with national governments. .
- The schedules of Cities Alliance are complicated. On one hand, approval procedures take time and frequently do not coincide in time with the budget that cities or partners allocate. Often, to fulfill requirements of the grant proposal, cities advance involving stakeholders, communities and link investment, it is then the duty of the city to follow up and but this means that they require the grants very soon. For example, the drafting of the CDS grant proposal of Lilongwe already required the city to advance and the process was financed mainly through resources of the partner (Joburg)
- The time frame for the grant- 24 months, is short, and should be adjustable to the calendar of local governments, taking into consideration elections, budget years, funding programs.
- The Cities Alliance secretariat is supportive in its approval and administration of funds. Many cities initially welcome that the secretariat does not involve itself in grant management, as they feel freer to choose partners whilst other donor agreements often earmark and by-pass the agenda of local governments. However, the involvement of the CA team, for example through the regional advisors, is crucial to increasing coherence.

**5. Adjusting focus in Country programs- how to choose the criteria**

Focusing on certain countries might help to streamline portfolios, mainly inside the CA secretariat itself. We agree and are committed to supporting the sharing and

dissemination of experience of South African (running mentoring schemes), Brazilian and Philippine cities (mentoring foreseen for 2011). We also explore the possibility of Chinese and Indian cities to share experience through this modality.

We suggest involving the LG Associations wherever possible in the preparation and development of country programs and agreements. A good example is the CA programme in Uganda, where the CA regional advisor took into account some of the lessons of the long term partnership of the Danish and Ugandan associations.

We suggest as possible criteria for the selection of focus countries: strong LGA support and involvement, and the initial agreement of national government to dialogue with local authorities on urban development.

**6. The catalytic grant facility involves many actors. The facility should focus on the priority of cities and facilitate dialogues on urban policies and frameworks ,**

- It is important to revise the requirements for requesting the foreseen grants, as they should respond to a Cities Alliance result framework. The concern is that cities have their own result framework which focuses on management and implementation. Are cities able to apply for these catalytic grants, or are these a tool directed more to universities and agencies, that can fulfill requirements of knowledge and timing?

**7. Knowledge management and advocacy**

How can we ensure that knowledge is built where it is most needed; inside the small and medium sized-cities of the LD countries?

- UCLG underlines the need for new ways of sharing the CA member knowledge. Yellow pages, data banks, facts and figures, easily accessible knowledge is interesting and useful for cities.

- Knowledge outcomes and advocacy cannot be driven by donor groups. To promote more process knowledge, local leadership needs to be promoted. Local experts need to be involved to elaborate knowledge based on their experience.

- The partners of the flagship programme represent different interest (UN organizations, WBI academic sector, South African city network). Institutional sustainability is crucial, for example through involving associations or cities.