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The Role of Cities in the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Achievement of Sustainable Development Goals

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“Therefore, it will be under the auspices of cities where we will succeed or fail in achieving our goals of poverty eradication, equality, climate change reduction, and ensuring healthy lives. It will be the cities that determine if we achieve inclusive economic growth or yield to greater inequality. It is in cities where people will seek opportunities for higher education and employment. And, it will be cities that determine if we will continue our steadily increasing usage of the world’s resources or if we can realize a more sustainable path. This is why sustainable development goal (SDG) 11, “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”, is so important. Success in achieving the targets under SDG 11 sets the stage for achieving targets in many of the other SDG goals”¹.

00: Background and introduction: The SDGs replace and build on the MDGs

In September 2015 World leaders met in New York and adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)². With effect from 1st January 2016, the SDGs replaced and started building on the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)³ which had been under implementation from 2000 to end of 2015. As was the case with the MDGs, there is consensus in all Member States of the United Nations(UN) to effectively implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and achieve the SDGs. The 2030 Agenda and the SDGs being universal, integrated, and ambitious for poverty eradication leaving no one behind has been at the center of development efforts by all UN Member States since January 2016.

In this presentation the focus is on the role of cities in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and achievement of the SDGs. “In addition to Sustainable Development Goal 11, which calls for sustainable cities and human settlements, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable

¹See Kristie Daniel: Goal 11- Cities will play an important role in achieving SDGs. In UN Chronicle: The Magazine of the United Nations, vol. 42014, April 2015: <https://unchronicle.un.org/article/goal-11-cities-will-play-important-role-achieving-sdgs>

² See United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/70/1 adopted by the United Nations Summit for the Adoption of the Post 2015 Development Agenda on 25 September 2015. The 17 SDGs are: Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere; Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture; Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages; Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all; Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls; Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all; Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all; Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all; Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation; Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries; Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable; Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns; Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts; Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development; Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss; Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels; Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

³ The Millennium Development Goals are to: (1) eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; (2) achieve universal primary education; (3) promote gender equality and empower women; (4) reduce child mortality; (5) improve maternal health; (6) combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; (7) ensure environmental sustainability; and (8) develop a global partnership for development.

Development acknowledges the crucial role of sustainable urban development to the quality of life of people”.⁴ In effect the real problematic is focused on the role the governance, leadership and communities of cities have to play in implementing the 2030 Agenda.

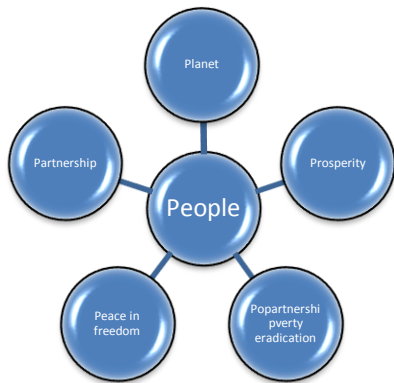
The gist of the presentation is that the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs have put before the governance systems, leadership, people and the communities in cities a big development challenge. Cities require unprecedented institutional, leadership and human capacities as anchors and catalysts for other resources in order to succeed in meeting the SDGs challenge. The following are some of the key questions related to this that the presentation seeks to address. How much work has the 2030 Agenda and pursuit of achieving the SDGs put on Cities? It is the nature and extent of this work that defines the roles the Cities will play. What transformation drivers are in the 2030 Agenda that the city governance and leadership must pay particular attention to in order to have a solid base for their strategies for achieving SDGs? What is the role of the leadership in the cities and local governments in this critical work? What capacities will the cities and local governments need to develop in order to successfully implement the 2030 Agenda and achieve SDGs in their areas of jurisdiction? Are there already some examples from cities which illustrate how achieving SDGs is being approached?

1.0: The 2030 Agenda & SDGs vs Mandates and Responsibilities of Cities

How much work has the 2030 Agenda and pursuit of achieving the SDGs put on Cities? A quick analysis of the SDGs shows that as was the case with the MDGs, SDGs will best be achieved when cities get to execute their mandates and responsibilities effectively. All development is local. The SDGs will need to be achieved at local level. It is fundamental that the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs were designed for the prosperity of the people and the planet to live peacefully with freedom from poverty and other encumbrances. And all this can be achieved if the whole world works in partnership and collaboration. People, planet, peace in freedom, prosperity, partnerships and poverty eradication are what we have termed as the 6 Ps of the 2030 Agenda which is focused on the People. It is an agenda that actualizes “we the people” which is central to constitutions of many countries. Whichever way one looks at it, people live at local level and it is at this very level that the action for the 2030 Agenda and SDGs must be solidified. Therefore, even before studying the legal mandates and responsibilities of each city which spell out what functions and responsibilities and resources are devolved, delegated, or deconcentrated to a particular city in question, one can say that implementing the 2030 Agenda and achieving the 17 SDGs in a city a big job. While for city governance and leadership the functions and responsibilities they have to shoulder to ensure sustainable development in the city need to be clearly spelt out legally, and therefore this will differ from country to country and even city to city, achieving SDGs remain a heavy responsibility especially if it has to be done leaving no one behind.

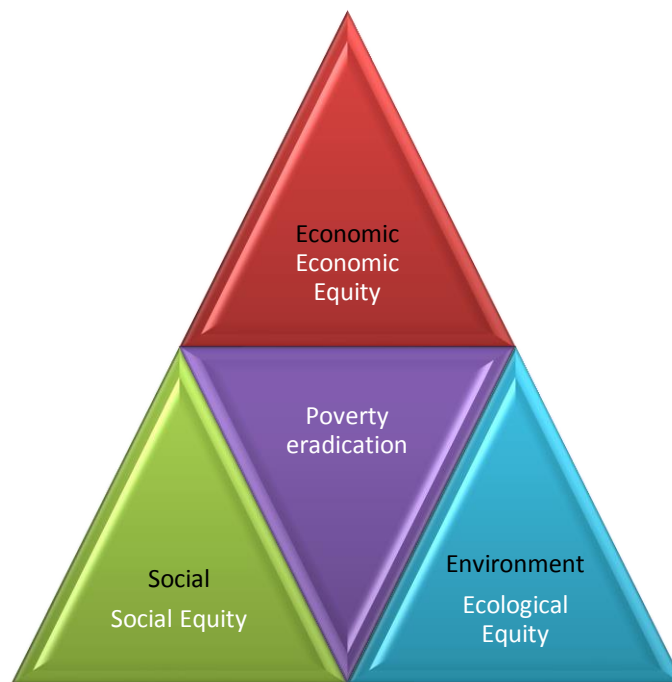
⁴Sustainable Development Solutions Network: Getting Started with the SDGs in Cities: A Guide for Stakeholders (July 2016) page 99

Diagram 1: The Ps of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable Development



The majority of the people in many countries will, by 2030 live in cities. Consequently cities must pay particular attention to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda which is a people focused ambitious Agenda for transforming the lives of the people. “In 2016, an estimated 54.5 per cent of the world’s population lived in urban settlements. By 2030, urban areas are projected to house 60 per cent of people globally and one in every three people will live in cities with at least half a million inhabitants”⁵. Therefore eradicating poverty to ensure prosperity, peace in freedom and a sustainable livelihood in a safe planet will need that cities pay particular attention to the three dimensions of sustainable development namely; economic, social and environmental sustainability.

Diagram 2: The Dimensions of Sustainable Development



All the three dimensions of sustainable development are confronting the biggest challenge of poverty eradication and at the core of this challenge is equity.

⁵ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2016). The World’s Cities in 2016 – Data Booklet (ST/ESA/ SER.A/392 www.unpopulation.org)

Eradicating poverty becomes real not only when there is a boost in economic growth, or enhanced delivery of social services or even improvement of environment. Eradicating poverty becomes real when there is visible social equity, economic equity and ecological equity (meaning that the generation of today exploits the environment in the process of eradicating poverty but in a way that ensures that the environment remains useful and usable for the generations of tomorrow. Eradicating poverty today should not create poverty tomorrow. And this is not only in matters of environment. It is also in decisions of borrowing, investment, and social services. For examples: investing in education today creates human capital for tomorrow. Investing in health facilities contributes to a healthy population of tomorrow. Investing in infrastructure today provides assets for development for tomorrow. Leaders and people of cities today must realize that managing a city is a combination of managing to provide for today's population's needs and tomorrow's population's needs as well. All this work is big and critical not only in its substance but also because it is full of challenges.

1.1: Core challenges in achieving sustainable Development

All countries are confronted with and are addressing various challenges of different nature and varying magnitude in order to effectively implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and achieve the SDGs. The challenges vary according to the socio-politico-economic conditions of each country. All countries are not in the same situation even on a single issue such as poverty. However, despite the differences, there are core challenges that likely to be faced by all countries irrespective of the conditions. They are: (i) How to eradicate poverty in all its forms, (ii)How to achieve social sustainability, (iii)How to achieve environmental sustainability, and (iv) How to integrate the three pillars of sustainable development and mainstream them into coherent development policies and strategies. These core challenges point to a critical question: What are the development policy and strategy implications in cities that the implementation of the 2030 Agenda has generated? The policy and strategy implications are related to the four core challenges and will require transformed and strengthened governance capacities in cities.

Diagram 3: Core challenges



The challenge of how to eradicate poverty: Poverty eradication is the greatest global challenge facing the world today and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. The number of people in the world now living in extreme poverty has declined by more than half, falling from 1.9 billion in 1990 to 836 million in 2015. Despite this reduction in global poverty many countries in Latin America are still facing the challenge of eradicating poverty. It concerns inequality and inequity and suffering all the indignity of being regarded as poor and hopeless. Basically the very first challenge confronting sustainable development is how to eradicate poverty. As a challenge confronting government, it can prove persistent and teasing especially where economic growth is accompanied by growth in inequalities. Where this happens people who become less poor remain disgruntled because they turn their attention to the very rich. Thus the problem turns into the issue of the gap between the rich and the poor rather than poverty as such.

The challenge of how to achieve social sustainability: Social sustainability can be a very ambiguous huge undertaking because it covers almost all aspects of human life. Even poverty itself is a big social issue. To deal with ensuring social sustainability one has to address issues related to equity and equality, social cohesion, social inclusion, shelter, education, health, youth engagement and employment, engaging the elderly, gender and advancement of women in social economic and political life, migration, population and demographic growth and dynamics, social diversity etc. Each of these is a huge topic in itself and would require big policy and strategic actions to address it.

The challenge of how to achieve environmental sustainability: Sustaining the environment such that current generations do not create environmental conditions that will be untenable for the future generations is a complex thing and it touches not only on environment but also very much on issues of poverty eradication as well as on those related to social and economic sustainability. For example;

“As an emerging economy, Mexico has to confront difficult tradeoffs in pursuing its economic, social and environmental goals. Nevertheless, Mexico has strengthened its environmental policies and institutions and increased public investment in environmentally related infrastructure. Significant progress has been achieved in improving the environmental quality of life. However, environmentally related policies have often involved indirect subsidies to help the poor - for example, lower prices for energy and water - rather than direct social transfers. This approach has not always been effective for achieving its main policy goals. Thus there is considerable scope to rebalance the policy mix and to promote the transition to a socially inclusive form of green growth in a more effective, efficient and equitable manner.”
(OECD Environmental performance Reviews 2013)

This poses a big challenge for cities that must engineer economic growth, fighting poverty and create social equity leaving no one behind. All this must at the same time balance with environmental sustainability to ensure that actions of today's generation do not jeopardise the survival of the future ones.

The challenge of how to integrate and streamline the three pillars of sustainable development in city policies and strategies: Then there is the teasing challenge related to how to integrate the three pillars of sustainable development and mainstream them into City

level local development policies and strategies. The UN General Assembly resolution clearly states that

“The challenges and commitments contained in these major conferences and summits are interrelated and call for integrated solutions. To address them effectively, a new approach is needed. Sustainable development recognizes that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, combatting inequality within and among countries, preserving the planet, creating sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and fostering social inclusion are linked to each other and are interdependent”.

Each pillar being treated alone is likely to be unsuccessful. But even if, to some measure, it succeeded it would not be sustainable because any shortfalls in one pillar easily causes faults in the others. Addressing issues of the environment without addressing issues of poverty would not yield sustainable positive results. Or achieving the goal on education without addressing investment, job creation and unemployment can easily result into large numbers of unemployed youth which in turn can cause social unrest and other problems. The challenges pointed out above, to be effectively addressed will need effective city governance.

1.2: Cities must deliver on each SDGs

Looking at the 17 SDGs, each of them will require effectiveness of service delivery at local level to be achieved (see diagram bellow).

Diagram 4: Showing SDGs services linked to them

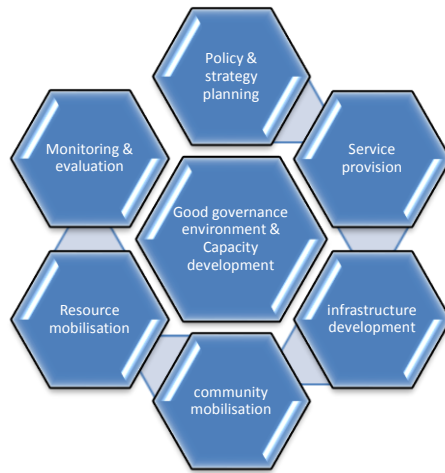
Goal 1	End poverty in all its forms everywhere: Cities governance includes delivery of services such as: health, education, infrastructure, information, law and order, justice, energy, water, water and sanitation etc, which services when effectively delivered contribute to fighting poverty in many of its forms,
Goal 2	End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture: Local governments in rural areas promote agriculture, food banks, agricultural extension services, local land utilisation by laws, agricultural research etc to ensure food security
Goal 3	Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages: cities governance includes providing basic health services in general, urban health policies, primary health care, immunization, hospitals, health clinics, pharmaceutical, maternity, etc.
Goal 4	Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all: Many cities governance systems are in charge of basic education services, infrastructure including school buildings etc, kindergarten centres, primary schools and other schools etc.
Goal 5	Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls: cities governance includes interacting with local communities to discourage gender bias and discrimination practices, girl child education, maternal health care, women land and property sensitives laws, etc.
Goal 6	Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all: City governance includes provision of services including, clean water, refuse collection, sanitation services, sewerage etc.
Goal 7	Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all: Cities governance includes ensuring lighting cities, heating and cooling, etc.
Goal 8	Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all: Cities governance includes providing education services to develop a skilled employable population, local economic and employment policies, local investment environment, labour bye laws commercial and industrial centres, etc.
Goal 9	Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation: Cities governance includes , transport infrastructure eg road networks in urban areas, industrial parks, innovation incubation centres etc.
Goal 10	Reduce inequality within and among countries: Cities governance makes bye laws governing equal opportunities

	for local contractors. They also make by laws governing local wages and employment etc.
Goal 11	Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable: This is a core Cities governance function but which depends on all the other goals being achieved.
Goal 12	Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns: Cities governance make and enforce by laws governing protection of consumers and areas of investment for production.
Goal 13	Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts: Cities governance includes regulation of emissions in cities and other climate change related practices
Goal 14	Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development: Cities bordering Oceans and seas, regulate exploitation and pollution of the waters
Goal 15	Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss: Local governments make and enforce by laws in this area.
Goal 16	Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels: Cities governance includes the public institution that is closest to the people. They need to be effective, inclusive, responsive and accountable to people
Goal 17	Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development: Cities' cooperation, collaboration, and partnerships locally, nationally and internationally will contribute to this goal.

City as an Institution for implementing the 2030 Agenda achieving the SDGs

Cities are critical players in the socio-politico-economic development of any country. Cities governance is closest to the people and communities living in the cities. They are therefore critical in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and achieving the SDGs. As shown above cities are linked directly or indirectly to each of the 17 SDGs and Goals 11 and 16 directly pertinent to them. There are many things the cities in every country will do to implement, or to facilitate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda to achieve the SDGs. The most critical ones are six: (i) Socio-economic and environmental strategy planning, (ii) Providing services, (iii) Infrastructure development, (iv) community mobilization, (v) Resource and investment mobilization, (vi) Monitoring and evaluation, and (vii) Institutional and Human Resource Capacity development.

Diagram 5: The bulk of the work of the city governance



Most importantly also cities are expected to provide the bedrock on which all operations of all actors in the city in question are anchored which when not provided the whole effort of implementing the 2030 Agenda is jeopardized. This bedrock is the respect for rule of law and justice in the governance of the city, observance of human rights in city governance, law and order, security of person and property, leadership, professionalism, transparency, accountability, ethical conduct, and integrity. All this goes to say that cities are a lynch pin that connects development actors with local city people. As such cities cannot afford to be weak and ineffective. For this reason, city governance leaders such as Mayors are occupying a strategically vantage position in the whole process of implementing the 2030 Agenda and achieving SDGs. First the cities leadership must mobilize the will to implement the agenda and the resolve to achieve the SDGs by 2030. They have now less than 15 years left for the job. The most critical part of the job is to mobilize the will of the entire city to embrace the 2030 Agenda, the SDGs and to engage in implementing it.

With the above analysis of the role of cities in implementing the SDGs, cities have a big task to accomplish until 2030. But then has it not always been the job of city governance to develop the city communities in all dimensions of development? “All SDGs are local” and “The achievement of all SDGs requires local action”.⁶

“Therefore, it will be under the auspices of cities where we will succeed or fail in achieving our goals of poverty eradication, equality, climate change reduction, and ensuring healthy lives. It will be the cities that determine if we achieve inclusive economic growth or yield to greater inequality. It is in cities where people will seek opportunities for higher education and employment. And, it will be cities that determine if we will continue our steadily increasing usage of the world’s resources or if we can realize a more sustainable path.

⁶ Statement delivered by representatives of local and regional governments Networks gathered around the global taskforce, New York 27 September 2015

This is why sustainable development goal (SDG) 11, “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”, is so important. Success in achieving the targets under SDG 11 sets the stage for achieving targets in many of the other SDG goals”⁷.

“...the role of local administrations in the achievement of the Agenda goes far beyond Goal 11. All of the SDGs have targets that are directly or indirectly related to the daily work of local and regional governments. Local governments should not be seen as mere implementers of the agenda. Local governments are policy makers, catalysts of change and the level of government best-placed to link the global goals with local communities”⁸.

And so, as part of the work the cities have to accomplish in implementing the 2030 Agenda, there is the work of transformation which itself is at the core of the 2030 Agenda. They will need to transform leadership mentalities, ideologies, organisational structures, institutions, communities, and the cities themselves.

2.0: Underlying transformation drivers contained in the 2030 Agenda

The 2030 Agenda and the SDGs contain critical underpinnings of the need for transformation in city governance. These include: the notion of integration, leaving no one behind, partnerships and effective, inclusive and accountable institutions as well as transformation itself. All the 17 goals necessitate highly capable city governance. Moreover, goal 16 commits countries to building effective, inclusive and accountable institutions. This includes in city governance also. Below we consider some of these underpinnings beginning with the notion of transformation itself. While the above challenges are daunting and should occupy a city governance and leadership, the day today challenges of the cities for which capacity development will have to be ensured concerns how to deliver services leaving no one behind, how to integrate city policies, strategies, action plans, programs etc, mainstreaming all the SDGs, and how to work collaboratively and in partnerships with other players and stakeholders in the private and civil society sectors at local, national, and international levels.

⁷See Kristie Daniel: Goal 11 - Cities will play an important role in achieving SDGs. In UN Chronicle: The Magazine of the United Nations, vol. 42014, April 2015: <https://unchronicle.un.org/article/goal-11-cities-will-play-important-role-achieving-sdgs>

⁸ UCLG: The Sustainable Development Goals: What Local Governments need to know

Diagram 5: Underlying drivers of transformation in the 2030 Agenda



2.1: The notion of transformation

The 2030 agenda is “the bold and transformative steps which are urgently needed to shift the world to a sustainable and resilient path”. Member States set “out a supremely ambitious and transformational vision” for the world and so in implementing this vision transformation needs to be one of the prime drivers. Those who are concerned with city governance, institutions, systems, structures, practices as well as other capacities, need to be considering the kind of transformation that they need to undertake to enable the city to achieve the SDGs. Even implementing SDG 16 must be approached from the side of “transforming” rather than just “developing” institutions. Whether it is creating new institutions, readjusting, or strengthening existing ones, there is need to transform them to align them with the imperatives of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In adopting the 2030 Agenda, the real challenge is not really on institutional development which has been an on-going concern in many countries and technical assistance programs; but rather on institutional transformation to support the vision of “transforming our world”.

2.2: Integration

The Rio+20 outcome document from 2012 calls for “...more coherent and integrated planning and decision-making at the national, subnational and local levels as appropriate, and to this end we call upon countries to strengthen national, sub-national and/or local institutions or relevant multi-stakeholder bodies and processes, as appropriate, dealing with sustainable development, including to coordinate on matters of sustainable development and to enable effective integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development.” The emphasis the 2030 Agenda puts on “integration’ necessitates changing, reforming, or transforming city governance to enable it pay particular attention to the need for integration. However, integration must be understood in a wider, fuller and deeper meaning to include: (i) integration of the three pillars of sustainable development (economic, social, and environment) into one coherent sustainable development policy or strategy for the city in question. The UN General Assembly resolution clearly states that “the challenges and commitments contained in these major conferences and summits are interrelated and call for integrated solutions. To address them effectively, a new approach is needed. Sustainable development recognizes that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, combating

inequality within and among countries, preserving the planet, creating sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and fostering social inclusion are linked to each other and are interdependent". (ii) integration in form of coordination and coherence of various institutional components, policies, strategies and programs which the city's governance puts in place to effectively implement the 2030 Agenda: the city governance and administration which in many cities is structured around departmentalized entities integrating institutions, policies, and strategies to implement the 2030 Agenda is going to be a necessary task that will involve transformation in city governance. (iii) Integration of the various sectors and development activities to collaborate their inputs and out puts and create a mutually complementally collaborative impact. (iv) Integration in terms of current and future policies and strategies: It is very tempting for current generations to focus on eradicating poverty or achieving any SDG at any cost and forget that sometimes a solution for today's problem can easily be a source of a bigger problem for the future. Therefore, through a process of anticipatory governance, policy risk assessment and disaster prevention, development strategies and policies of the current generation need to be integrating and collaborating in the way they will impact the needs of future generations. This calls for making city governance and administration entrepreneurial and future-oriented in the policies and strategies it makes and implements. (v) Vertical integration of the different levels of city governance and central government (central government and local government (or local authorities as they may be called in some countries). Vertical integration also includes integrations of national development strategies and policies with supra-national levels. For a country to move in the same direction towards sustainable development all levels of government need to be integrated and coordinated in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the 2030 Agenda. For some countries this is easier than for others. Big countries with multi-level political administrative structures with relative autonomy there is likely to be difficulties in integration especially because of subsidiary and sharing of mandates and competences. However, efforts have to be made to ensure that some parts of the country are not left behind in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda due to weaknesses in integrated development planning and service delivery for examples. (vi) Integration of modern city governance institutions with informal institutions especially at community level so that the two join forces to cause sustainable development especially in grassroots communities. (vii) Integration of city government, private sector and civil society in terms of all the three sectors working in the same direction of achieving sustainable development in the city. The way integration is being taken in many countries needs to be reviewed to ensure that it takes a comprehensive meaning in all these different terms. For the time being there are signs that integration is being taken mainly in the sense of coordination and collaboration only. It is inadequate. Given the normal departmentalized organization of city governance and administration institutions, systems and practices, integration in such a comprehensive way will necessitate indeed a fundamental transformation in city governance and administration.

2.3: Leaving no one behind

Institutions grow on the foundation of societal dominant ideology, values and norms. The emphasis the 2030 Agenda places on implementing the 2030 Agenda and achieving sustainable development "leaving no one behind" has strong ideological undertones including egalitarianism, equality, equity, involvement, inclusiveness, engagement, collaboration, social security, and socio-economic welfare. When you commit to effectively implement the 2030 Agenda and achieve its 17 SDGs with their 169 targets leaving no one behind, (the

disadvantaged, people living with disabilities, the children, the women, the youth, people living in abject poverty, people displaced by wars and conflict, people in remote areas, generations of the future etc), an ideology that emphasizes inclusiveness, participation, engagement, equality, equity, and most importantly, the delivery of services to all as well as social security and welfare is assumed and required. The provision of services to achieve the SDGs inevitably brings to the foreground the role of the welfare state. The framers of the 2030 Agenda did not mention the ideological underpinnings that would ensure that Sustainable Development gets achieved leaving no one behind. However, public administration being at the forefront of supporting the implementation of the agenda will have to engage this and unwrap its full meaning and implications. The values and norms that will ensure effective welfare will need development and transformation of city governance and administration institutions, systems, structures and practices as well as ideological outlook

3.0: City governance and administration reforms and transformation that would contribute to enabling cities achieve the SDGs:



3.1:Equilibrium of effectiveness, efficiency, economy and social equity

Change and reform in city governance and administration is not a new phenomenon. Reform programs have been a feature of many cities for some time. However, they have tended to focus on bureaucratic efficiency, effectiveness and to some extent economy. We recall the

three Es of management efficiency (Effectiveness, Efficiency, and Economy). City governance and administration reforms have been mainly inward looking. There is need in city governance and administration to pay particular attention to issues of social equity as dictated by the requirement of leaving no one behind in the achievement of the SDGs.

Therefore the transformation that city governance and administration must undergo in light of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and achievement of SDGs must be constituted by a combination of accomplishing the reforms that have been on-going to have effectiveness, economy and efficiency performance with strong doses of social equity measures to ensure that ultimately discriminatory practices, and marginalization are eliminated and social and political inclusion are entrenched in the practice of city governance and administration. The pursuit of efficiency, effectiveness and economy at the expense of social equity, the concern for results at the expense of outcomes and values, and the emphasis on money and individual wealth at the expense of the general wellbeing and community health may endanger achievement of SDGs by leaving a lot of people behind. This is where ideological orientation of the city governance and administration becomes a subject for transformation

For this there has to be a significant shift to integration, openness, citizen focus, creativity, innovation, information and communication technologies, public value, focus on outcomes, all facilitated by an empowering human resource management capacity that effectively embraces and harnesses diversity while identifying and applying highly effective incentives for creativity, innovation, transparency, accountability, ethics, and professionalism. City governance and administration must be both inward and outward looking. This will not happen without being engineered and energized by a transformational leadership. Optimization will not be enough. There has to be significant transformation including in the ideology that drives it. The environment that has emerged to determine the transformation rather than optimization evolves not only around implementation of the 2030 Agenda and achievement of SDGs but also welfare, state capitalism and participatory society.

3.2: Transformation in Ideological orientation

Achieving Sustainable Development leaving no one behind is an ideologically loaded commitment. When you commit to effectively implement the 2030 Agenda and achieve its 17 SDGs leaving no one behind, (the disadvantaged, people living with disabilities, the children, the women, the youth, people living in abject poverty, etc, an ideology that emphasizes the delivery of services to all with no exception is required. It is difficult for the author to discuss the provision of services to achieve the SDGs leaving no one behind without recalling the role of the welfare state in social equity. The framers of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs being in the neutral ground of United Nations could not mention the ideological underpinnings that would ensure that Sustainable Development gets achieved leaving no one behind. The very first transformation that city governance and administration in general and public service in particular needs to undergo concerns the ideological orientation that channels the thinking and operations of the public service towards commitment to the welfare of the people living no one out or behind. The debate on ideology and delivery of public services has been dominated by considerations of who delivers the service; private or public sector? This is not

the correct debate because whether it is the private sector or public sector the service can be effectively and even efficiently delivered. However, by putting a particular emphasis on “leaving no one behind”, the 2030 Agenda calls for a commitment to serving all which calls for social equity. That requires a pro-people/society ideology irrespective of the differences in their abilities to pay for the services.

3.3: Responding to the emergency of a participatory society/culture:

One of the determinants of the differences in the way public administration is structured and behaves in different countries is the fact that societies are different and consequently they design public administration according to their needs. There is an emerging trend whereby societies are demanding enhanced participation in decision making and influence of the things that matter in their lives including public administration/government and the delivery of critical services. The emergence of participatory societies means that city governance and administration should not be inward looking only but outward as well, if anything to respond to this demand for participation by the people. A city governance and administration that responds to the demands for efficiency alone is not suitable to serve a society that is demanding participation, engagement, and values such as equality, equity, responsiveness, inclusiveness and others which when pursued to their extreme may go contrary to efficiency or at best redefine it. This is the basis of transformation of the city governance and administration rather than reforms which were suitable for the demand for efficiency.

3.4: Responding to re-emergence of State capitalism and the return of the Public enterprise: Structural and institutional arrangements for cities’ investment for production and provision of public goods and services.

Scholars of public Sector management or Public Administration must have noticed the swing back of the public enterprise after a strong and lengthy wave of privatization since the 1980s which had been built on the advocacy that the private sector enterprise is more efficient. The return or the resilience of the public enterprise in many countries has been partly due to what some scholars have termed as “republicanization” (republicanization of formerly privatized firms providing services of general interest). “.....it is likely that the trend of privatization in the local public services is still prevailing worldwide, it is important to acknowledge that republicanization occurs, in different countries, under different political environments, often driven however by similar rationales: excessive prices charged to users by private concessionaires, concerns about the sustainability of investment, environmental issues, affordability and quality of service” (Massimo Florio, University of Milan, 2014). Our suspicion is that the requirement to implement the 2030 Agenda and to achieve the SDGs living no one behind is likely to rekindle very strongly the defence and satisfaction of the “public interest” however defined and to encourage many cities and local governments to engage in more ownership or operation of public enterprises. The main point here is that local governments, alone or in partnership with other public and private actors will have to invest in what will ensure sustainable development especially when it comes to ensuring equitable delivery of essential public Services including education, health, water, electricity, information, transportation, judicial services, etc. local governments had already committed

to this in their statement in September 2015: “No success without a fairer distribution of resources and investment: We know that massive public and private investments will be necessary to improve resilient infrastructures and access to basic services in cities and territories, address inequalities, support local economies, promote culture as driver of development, cope with the impact of climate change, and build the cities that will host 2.5 billion new urban residents over the next three decades, mostly in developing countries”. Social equity itself will necessitate investment from public administration.

3.5: Integrating the current with the future generation: Future orientated Public Administration

In many developing countries, optimization lacked integration with the future. The solutions it brought to public administration applied to the problems of the day and created problems for the future. Optimization needs to be balanced with transformation to address the challenges of the current and future generations beginning with effective support to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and achieving the SDGs.

Most city administrations are predisposed to identify and solve temporal problems. And this is what most public service reform programs that aimed at optimization have tended to focus on. However, achieving sustainable development requires looking far ahead to foresee the future challenges and problems and find solutions to them today. Governments must have data and information systems as well as qualified data and information analysts that will enable them to look at trends and predict future trajectories and find solutions to challenges and problems before they become crises. Such public servants are what I would like to call scientific prophets. They foretell the future but based on data and information. Transforming city governance and administration should include making it future oriented, pro-active rather than reactive, more dynamic, and innovative. A future oriented city governance and administration will promote the spirit of innovation and change-readiness in the city, transform mind-sets and create a different organisational culture and norms. The major difference between optimization and transformation is that while optimization is about making the most of existing resources of all sorts, transformation is about innovation, creative thinking and trying out new ideas and new ways of doing things: something that may in the short term look inefficient in the use of resources but in the long term the most useful in terms of cherished values such as inclusiveness, equity, responsiveness and leaving no one behind in development.

“The SDGs are a cause for celebration by local and regional governments the world over. Even before the confirmation of the final 17 goals, the inclusive nature of the Post-2015 process itself represented a major victory for all stakeholders”⁹. This statement points to the fact that local governments welcomed the big role the 2030 Agenda threw to them in the development of their countries and communities. This also gives hope in the commitment of local governments to implement the agenda despite the challenges.

Over a period of time in many countries many people have been left behind especially in the consumption of critical services. In many instances the institution of local government

⁹UCLG: The Sustainable Development Goals: What Local Governments Need to know (quotation from the preface)

has not been challenged to work and delivery services leaving no one behind, collaboratively and in an integrated manner. Consequently in many local governments both rural and urban, but more so in cities, poverty and inequality is still a big problem with many left behind already. To now turn around and pay particular attention to these values will require a sustained capacity development for effective, collaborative, and integrated local government for sustainable development. Local government as an institution ought to be very kin on figuring out how to address these challenges. And supporting capacity development of local governments ought to start focusing on how local government leadership, local government public services/servants can change mindset, behavior, conduct, practices, skills and knowledge to align their capacities with the requirements of integrated local development, leaving no one behind, collaboration and partnerships. In many instances many local government public servants have operated in contexts of new public management with particular attention to efficiency, economy and other private sector management values. These may not necessarily support a local government public service that is driven by leaving no one behind, integration, collaboration and partnerships.

Mobilizing total will to implement the 2030 Agenda:

Since the 2030 Agenda with its 17 goals and 169 targets were adopted last year, one of the things that have been emphasized is that it will require strong political will to implement the agenda. In a general way the political will in any city to implement the 2030 Agenda is required. However, political will alone will not achieve much. “We the people” should not be reduced to “we the political leaders of the city”. The rhetoric around the need for political will has been on-going since a long time and it surrounds the arguments about why reforms and programs do not succeed much. This rhetoric needs to be examined. Our view is that over emphasizing the “political will” underestimates the influence other actors, besides political leaders; have on the success or other wise of development programs in a given city

Diagram 6: Total will for implementing the 2030 Agenda



Success is always driven by a composite of the will from various actors. In the case of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in any city there is need for: (i) the political will, (ii) social/civic/community will (the people must be willing and committed to implement the Agenda), (iii) the administrative will (the bureaucracy, ie the public servants at international, national and city levels depending on the partnerships will be forged) must be willing and

committed to implementing the agenda), and (iv) the will of development partners including donors especially in terms of financial and technical assistance. In many countries some reform or development programs have failed to achieve the desired results because public Servants do not want them irrespective of strong political will. The power of the bureaucrats to resist, sabotage and deliberately move slowly in implementation is well known in classical public administration. Similarly some reform or development programs have failed because communities refuse or resist them. Finally in poor countries, heavily dependent on development aid, the ambitious 2030 Agenda will be difficult to implement without official development assistance and other forms of support. The will of development partners both national and international is critical here. Even if the Addis plan for Financing Sustainable development emphasized national resource mobilization, international financing will play a big role in implementing the agenda.

All this goes to say that the concept of total will must replace the rhetoric of political will. It is in line with the 2030 Agenda’s call for engagement, inclusiveness, partnerships and collaboration as well as leaving no one behind. Many countries are involved in mobilizing civil society, private sector and development partners to engage fully in the implementation of the Agenda. We believe that the most desired, and probably most effective political will in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda is the will that calls up on all actors in public, private and civil society sectors at community, national and international levels saying: “This work of implementing the 2030 Agenda and achieving the SDGs is too big, too complex and too important to be left to the will of political leaders in the city alone. All actors must be willing to chip in whatever contribution they have to lead to success. That also is part of leaving no one behind.

Mobilizing for collective impact in implementing the 2030 Agenda

Diagram 7: Collective impact



One of the approaches that could lead to this total will to implement the 2030 Agenda and achievement of SDGs is what is known as the collective impact.¹⁰ “The Collective Impact approach is premised on the belief that no single policy, government department, organisation or program can tackle or solve the increasingly complex social problems we face as a society. The approach calls for multiple organisations or entities from different sectors to abandon their own agenda in favour of a common agenda, shared measurement and alignment of effort. Unlike collaboration or partnership, Collective Impact initiatives have centralised infrastructure – known as a backbone organisation – with dedicated staff whose role is to help participating organisations shift from acting alone to acting in concert”. Collective impact rhymes with integration which is emphasised in the 2030 Agenda.

¹⁰ John Kania & Mark Kramer first wrote about collective impact in the Stanford Social Innovation Review in 2011

The collective impact approach is suited for the work of cities and other urban areas who are at the point of direct contact with communities, local level community based organizations, NGOs, small and big private sector enterprises, central governments agencies and service providers, faith bases organizations, international organizations working at local level and different levels of local governments. The 2030 Agenda and the 17 indivisible SDGs are complex enough to call for the collective impact approach. For example a City or a Municipality would start by adopting the 2030 Agenda as the Common Agenda for all actors in the City.

Capacity development

The last aspect of the role of the city governance that I would like to highlight is capacity development. All the challenges, all the tasks, functions and responsibilities that have been dictated by the need to effectively implement the 2030 Agenda and achieve the SDGs will need adequate capacities of all sorts: institutional, human, structural, material, policy, legal frameworks, governance environment, financial, information, partnerships and others in order to be successful. Therefore one of the most critical roles city governance plays is capacity development. Working with research institutions, management development institutions, university faculties and others City governance needs to intensify the search for better ways of work to implement the agenda and achieve the SDGs. This will further encourage creativity and innovation.