

**UN HABITAT**  
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

 **UCLG**  
United Cities  
and Local Governments

 **Junta de Andalucía**  
Consejería de Igualdad, Políticas Sociales y Conciliación  
AGENCIA ANDALUZA DE COOPERACIÓN INTERNACIONAL PARA EL DESARROLLO



# **#CitiesAreListening: Launch of the “Sub-National Urban Policy: A Guide” (DRAFT)**

**February 25, 2020**  
14:00 hrs. UTC+1 (16:00 hrs. Nairobi time)

## The Current context we find ourselves in

In the midst of the COVID-19 crisis, the critical role of local and regional governments in protecting the rights of people and the planet through public service delivery has been emphasized and is clearer than ever. Local and regional governments around the world are at the forefront of the current crisis, working together with communities, health authorities, and the private sector to mitigate the current outbreak of COVID-19 while maintaining an orderly functioning of public services in their cities and territories. Within this context, the facilitation of best practices, knowledge exchange, and coherent policies at the territorial level has been key to the response to the pandemic.

Currently more than half of the population lives in cities and it is projected that 70% will live in urban areas by 2050 (UN-Habitat, 2014). SDG 11 aims to make “cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”, and the New Urban Agenda provides a political framework for authorities and society within which local and regional actions can turn the aspirations of SDG 11, as well as many other objectives of other SDGs, into reality for citizens. Thus, the achievement of this Goal and objectives depend on the leadership and commitment of local and regional governments to exercise good governance for sustainable territorial development.

Although the context of the SDGs is global, their achievement depends on local and regional action, therefore, their localization implies counting on sub-national contexts to achieve the 2030 Agenda, as well as prioritizing a bottom-up approach of development, that is, having a strong participation of local and regional governments in the achievement of the SDGs and in light of the COVID-19 recovery.

## Relevance and purpose of Sub-National Urban Policies

This political leadership of local and regional authorities, to locate the SDGs in their territory, requires a connection to technical solutions through urban policy instruments that guide planning and strategies to achieve sustainable development. In this context, Sub-national Urban Policies become a governance instrument to make viable the localization of the SDGs in cities and regions -as much as they summon all actors for the collective definition of the vision of territorial development, based on the concept of social, economic and environmental sustainability, in whose centre people are located-.

Sub-national Urban Policy allows to articulate the relationship between different territorial jurisdictions and to solve challenges that might arise while facilitating effective and efficient public action. The administration of the national territory requires instruments that facilitate and articulate urban management in regions. Subnational Urban Policies function as vehicles that align the actions, strategies and resources of the national agenda towards the lower level - territorial contexts- and vice versa.

Subnational Urban Policies are an instrument for territorial decentralization which enhances the comparative advantages of the territory to respond to global competitiveness and allow it to advance independently and in coordination with the bets of sustainable development in the national context.

A Subnational Urban Policy should be:

*An urban management instrument whose objective is to contribute to sustainable territorial development, multi-level governance and territorial decentralization, within the framework of a common ideal of a city for all, led by the sub-national government and built with the participation of society. It incorporates guidelines, strategies, and actions to solve problems and take advantage of urbanization opportunities, improve planning, strengthen governance, and finance the provision of goods and services, depending on the attributes and identity of the regional territory.*

Urban policies in the sub-national context facilitate and promote the following aspects:

- Establish integrated and articulated strategies and programmes for territorial development, according to the particularities and identity of the sub-national context, seeking to ensure that their development is socially integrated, environmentally balanced and economically competitive.
- Redefine the relationships between the different territorial jurisdictions that coexist in the sub-national context, promoting dialogue, collaboration and multi-level governance.
- Establish a line of coherence and alignment in urban management that enables institutional reorganization and articulates the actions of various public and private organizations and actors that intervene in the cities that make up the sub-national territory.
- Guide and base the modernization of the normative and regulatory frameworks required to address urban challenges based on experience of the territory and the culture of the use and exploitation of it by citizens.
- Focus and optimize the efficient investment of national and local resources.

### *Subnational Urban Policies: A Guide*

There is general agreement on the importance of producing policy instruments at sub-national levels to advance their implementation, with a practical and proactive approach. Moreover, the diversity of the world's institutional architecture does not allow to propose a unique and useful solution for the definition of a SUP, which adapts to all this complexity. However, it is possible to extract lessons from different realities to share and expand the definition of SUPs.

Therefore, UN-Habitat (specifically the Policy, Legislation and Governance Section), together with United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), and the support of the Andalusian Agency of International Development Cooperation (AACID), have developed a ***Sub-National Urban Policy: A Guide*** as an instrument to support urban management for governments and stakeholders.

The **Guide** is focused on providing an inventory of experiences and a work system for developing Sub-national Urban Policies (SUP). It expands the knowledge and engagement in the better understanding of these instruments, including what SUPs are, what they are for, who benefits from them and the problems they attempt to solve and a methodological guide to formulate, implement and develop Subnational Urban Policies, specifying all phases of the process (including monitoring and evaluation), as well as citizen participation and best practices: “what to do and what not to do”.

An advanced draft of the guide was presented and debated in July 2020 in a virtual Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on “Sub-National Urban Policies” organized by UN-Habitat, with the support of the AACID. During this meeting, several global experts from diverse sectors and regions, gathered for discussing mayor challenges and opportunities on relation to the development of sub-national urban agendas.

## Key questions

Main questions to be addressed during the debate will be:

- *How is the relation between NUP and SNUPs? How they can influence and reinforce each other?*
- *How can SNUP contribute to better coordination between the different levels of government on relation to the sustainable urban development?*
- *What are the challenges that SNUP definition process brings?*

## #CitiesAreListening: Launch of the “Sub-National Urban Policy: A Guide

As part of the #CitiesAreListening Experiences, UCLG, UN-Habitat, and the AACID, will celebrate on February 25 the global launching of the “Sub-National Urban Policy: A Guide”, as a follow up event of the EGM on Subnational Urban Policies. The **Guide** is framed within the set of publications on urban policies of UN-Habitat

The launch event and dialogue seeks to present the guide, its importance within the context of the 2030 and New Urban Agendas, and hear from local and regional governments on their specific experiences related to subnational urban policies.

## TENTATIVE PROGRAMME

### 14. 00 | OPENING - INTRODUCTION

- **María del Carmen Cardosa Zea**, Deputy-Counsellor of Equity, Social Policies and Conciliation, Government of Andalusia.
- **Maimunah Mohd-Sharif**, Executive Director, UN-Habitat (TBC)
- **Emilia Saiz**, Secretary General, UCLG

### 14.35 | PRESENTATION

- **María del Pilar Téllez**, Metropolitan / Urban Policy Expert, UN-Habitat.

### 14.50 | PANEL DISCUSSION

- **Ilce Amarante**, President of the Instituto Nacional de Gestão do Território, Cabo Verde.
- **María del Carmen Compagni**; General Director of Urbanism and Territorial Planning; Regional Government of Andalusia, Spain.
- **M. Cemil Arslan**, Secretary General, Marmara Municipalities Union, Turkey
- **Angel Mariscal Estrada**, Mayor of Cuenca, Ecuador

Moderation: **Sara Hoeflich de Duque**, Learning Director, UCLG

### 15.20 | CLOSING REMARKS

- **María de la Luz Ortega Carpio**, Director of the Andalusian Agency of International Development Cooperation
- **Remy Sietchiping**, Chief, Policy, Legislation and Governance Section, UN-Habitat