

Esfahan Declaration and Plan of Action

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS FOR GOOD URBAN GOVERNANCE



REGIONAL WORKSHOP

Organised by CityNet, Colombo Plan, and the City of Esfahan
Supported by UNCHS (Habitat), UNDP (TUGI), UN-ESCAP, UNU

**Esfahan City, Iran
4 - 6 September 2000**

Esfahan Declaration on Building Good Urban Governance

We, the 45 participants from 27 cities and 13 countries, gathered here in this ancient and vibrant city of Esfahan, Iran, to deliberate on the theme of building partnerships for good urban governance from 4 to 6 September 2000

Recognise the efforts of various local, national, regional and international organisations to incorporate the tenets of good urban governance in realising sustainability in cities,

Recognise the urgent need to further improve urban governance to meet the challenges of rapid urbanisation and local environmental degradation,

Recognise the crucial role of good urban governance as an inclusive process in achieving a quality of life sought by the residents of our cities; especially the disadvantaged, marginalised and poor,

Do hereby declare that ...

We have shared our views and understanding of good urban governance. We have discussed the need to measure the quality of governance in our cities and assess the impacts of efforts to improve it, in order to ensure applicability, equity, acceptability, and ownership of governance processes at the local level.

We therefore call for the development of a framework or matrix within which cities and urban stakeholders can assess and prioritise governance indicators to measure urban governance performance.

We have explored the many facets of good urban governance and its relevance to all aspects of city management and the delivery of urban goods and services

We therefore call for in-depth campaigns to educate and raise awareness on issues related to governance at all levels of a city or urban area, from a community to a region. These campaigns need to develop ownership of governance at the local level to ensure acceptability and effective implementation.

We have identified the need to build on existing and ongoing efforts to incorporate the tenets of good urban governance in aspects of city management (policies, programmes, projects, and plans). The application of good urban governance requires action by all urban stakeholders.

We therefore call for the development of a set of tools and resources, and for broad capacity building in good urban governance.

We have developed a Plan of Action to operationalise the above points. We commit ourselves to the effective and timely implementation of the Plan of Action for Good Urban Governance.

Plan of Action for for Good Urban Governance

In building good urban governance practices at the local level, we, the participants hereby adopt the following Plan of Action for further intensive implementation at the local level.

In order to facilitate the internalisation of the concept of good urban governance, we will **build understanding and capacity** at the local level, by developing a range of information and knowledge resources to assist us in these processes

- ◆ We will develop and compile guidelines, checklists and benchmarks that will guide us in the application of good urban governance
- ◆ We will organise training sessions, short-term courses and on-the-job education in order to ensure professional development of our staff and of the people we interact with and serve.
- ◆ We will initiate dialogues amongst various local stakeholders on good urban governance

To achieve this, we will partner with local authorities, training and research institutions, NGOs and community groups, private sector entities, national agencies and ministries, and UN agencies. *We will identify local and regional partners for this purpose, and develop appropriate governance resources and tools.*

Focusing on broad involvement and inclusiveness in good urban governance, we will contribute to educate **and build awareness** on the tenets of good governance, by developing a 'governance inventory' that will document and package information on good governance practices.

- ◆ We will develop a framework within which common indicators will be used to document best practices on good governance.
- ◆ We will organise workshops and seminars, and other fora in order to garner broad acceptance and ownership of the concepts and tenets of governance.
- ◆ We will strive to share and disseminate information on good governance practices that we have implemented in our organisations and cities.

To achieve this, we will partner with a range of local and international organisations, including local authorities citizens groups, NGOs, and UN agencies. *We will formulate a common framework for good governance, and develop a governance inventory.*

Focussing on local action, we will build multi-stakeholder coalitions that monitor and evaluate actions towards good governance, and will advise and guide implementation.

- ◆ We will ensure broad participation and partnership among all local stakeholders in the development of good urban governance at the local level.
- ◆ We will initiate efforts towards institutional and administrative reform, and ensure that it is widely accepted and implemented.
- ◆ We will initiate action for networking and resource sharing so that the intended impacts of good governance is achieved
- ◆ We will put in place, mechanisms for third-party auditing and evaluation of our programmes and actions.

To achieve this, we will partner with local authorities, with national agencies and ministries, with NGOs and citizens groups, with other cities in the country and region, and with private sector entities. *We will develop a set of monitoring and evaluation tools to guide implementation, and to identify appropriate partners and resources who can assist us in these processes.*

The rapid economic growth seen in recent years in the Asian Pacific region resulted in an unprecedented urbanization that has left many urban centers unable to cope with the demands on their infrastructure and delivery of services. UN statistics, show that the proportion of people in developing countries who live in cities has almost doubled since 1960 (from less than 22 per cent to more than 40 percent), while in more-developed regions the urban share has grown from 61 per cent to 76 percent. By 2030, it is expected that nearly 5 billion (61 percent) of the world's 8.1 billion people will live in cities. However, this diverse and rapid change has not been even nor equitable, and many citizens have been left without access to basic services such as clean water, sanitation, or a home.

Due to the increasing demand on services and infrastructure, many cities have realized that they are falling behind as 'providers' of services. This has led some local authorities to shift their emphasis from being providers of services to becoming 'enablers' in essentially providing a facilitative environment for urban management. This shift in attitude on their perceived role is a key component of the recent push for "Good Urban Governance". At the same time various international and non-governmental organizations have also initiated activities towards wider adoption of the concept of good governance.

The generally accepted definition of good governance is ensuring respect for human rights and the rule of the law, strengthening democratisation, and promoting transparency and capability in public administration. These and related issues were deliberated in detail during a three-day workshop organised by CityNet, Colombo Plan and the City of Esfahan from 4 to 6 September 2000.

THE REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS FOR GOOD URBAN GOVERNANCE

**Esfahan City, Iran
4 - 6 September 2000**

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