Maria Luisa Zapata Trujillo

Deputy Director for Knowledge Management, ACI Medellín
mzapata@acimedellin.org

Background and contextualisation: Introducing the new paradigm

New role for cities

It is a reality that cities will be home to the majority of the population around the world. In some regions such as Latin America, this is already the situation. In that sense, their growth, planning and social and economic dynamics are facing a lot of pressure. This only means that more people will prefer to develop their lives in these urban centres because of the different possibilities they offer for quality of life and human development. Cities offer connections that are undoubtedly a key aspect in generating value for humans in the world today.

The fact the people are turning to cities to generate more value for themselves, their families and their society is putting governments at the limit of their capacity and pushing urban and social planning towards a new agenda of solutions that revolve around citizens. Cities and city leaders today need to foster creativity and capacity building in order to generate better space for the citizens, better services and better options for them to thrive in the local economy.

Wise Cities understand the fact that cities need to integrate new trends in urban planning, so that everything that a local government designs focuses on citizens, and even (why not?) that it comes from citizens, instead of trying to generate value from programmes and initiatives that are designed without taking citizens' concerns into account.

One of the main challenges cities need to address is the fact that they should act more strategically on the international agenda and endeavour to be a key player in the new global governance scenario, while at the same time they need to improve access to citizens' ideas and promote open innovation practices to develop new programmes locally.

It is not only a challenge to generate economic opportunities for the citizens, but also to generate balance between the urbanisation process, the growth in importance of cities and the capacity to generate better design and planning at local level. And balance is a key feature that global cities need to polish if they want to succeed amid the new global governance requirements.

Cities are now centres for acquiring and sharing knowledge. A new concept of knowledge relies on the capacity to generate innovative programmes and to adapt existing solutions to different realities – solutions that actually create better opportunities and comfort for humans. In a way, cities are equipped to put the citizen at the centre of development. However, the international system that has led global governance still struggles when it comes to yielding power and participation to local governments or regional leaders on the global agenda. Wise Cities need to step up in the new global agenda, integrating while at the same time becoming leaders in institutions that have historically represented national governments. The complexity that comes with decentralisation will make citizens ask themselves a question posed by the World Economic Forum, "What can I do?, but ones we must ask if we are to learn how to be partners, in this new, more decentralized world" (Woods, 2015).

But new scenarios require new rules, new policies and new interactions. Cities need to be the places where the combination and balancing of these issues take place. Cities that are more capable of generating adaptation to these new challenges will be able to serve as laboratories for other cities to learn from. Urban organisations can promote new alliances with such cities in order to overcome problems that repeat themselves in specific regions. And it is precisely this kind of city that will be able to take advantage of cities' new role to take the lead on the global agenda from the local level. It is these cities that are the ones required to lead a true change in the global governance dynamics.

Wise Cities understand that "a new historically distinctive form of the city – the Global City – has become a critical component of the devolved governance strategy of leading liberal states at the contemporary conjuncture. Such cities are, then, a facet of a historically specific form of world order" (Curtis, 2016).

In the end, a fair/virtuous city, that is, a Wise City should be smart, creative and fair, attempting to combine these qualities in such a way that its approach to citizenship is equal and inclusive rather than focusing on only the middle and upper classes (which smart and creative city/creative class arguments tend to do) it should serve for the needs of excluded, silenced, poor, aged, students, workers, etc.

Challenges

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The new global agenda – SDGs – provides a window to start integrating cities into the global governance of today. The fact that one of the SDGs addresses cities and the role they play in human development is

a hint that reveals the urgent matter of generating balance between nation-state institutions and local governments. Cities have become an opportunity to create and deliver possibilities and quality of life and the fact that, in the end, it is through local governments that the SDGs will be tackled. It goes beyond the new role of the cities, the recognition of the already existing capacities generated on the local level organizations. However, cities need to listen to their citizens: constant unplanned growth will only turn the odds against comfort and human development.

Goal 11, which is to "make cities and human settlement inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable", represents the first real development goal that addresses cities and local governments, enabling and aligning institutional efforts towards the development of cities. It should be used as a platform to establish new mechanisms for local level institutions to act and decide on better solutions to tackle the SDGs.

Integrated quadruple helix

The key now will be to transcend already hard to establish triple helix relations, and add a new component to them – the citizens. Individuals and organised collectives that allow citizens' beliefs and real expectations to be met need to be actively involved in the development of the SDGs at local level. Therefore, citizens, collectively, are and should continue to be key actors in society and development. The fact that cities are now growing in importance and becoming more important than countries levels up the position and role of citizens as well. In a way, the layers of governance have reached down to the basis of society – the people – and their voices, dreams and complaints are now more easily heard than ever, and the integration of these voices into the urban agenda generates more possibilities for cities to understand the concepts suggested by Wise Cities.

We also have to take into account the fact that citizens as groups can really lead initiatives to encourage a certain topic or issue. They can generate awareness and put their own concerns onto the public agenda. Collectives of citizens are able to bring certain discussions to the table and even destroy corporate and public agendas when allowed to use the various tools of democracy to empower citizenship and allow them to control the government's interventions and investment.

It gets even more challenging when you consider that citizens as individuals are also able to reach the highest levels of local, national and international organisations through social network. Public servants and leaders are now exposed and easy to reach through social networks. And they are actively responding to the possibility of generating a sensitive complaint through these channels. City leaders are now aware of the fact that governance translates into social networking and introduces new timing to answer and respond in a positive way to individuals' concerns in a particular city.

People expect not only to be heard, but to be provided with a solution to injustices with a quick and efficient response. Governments have had to adjust and improve delivery for their citizens and this is only

MARIA LUISA ZAPATA TRUJILLO

escalating as urban areas become more crowded and as more people are becoming active members of society and, of course, active members of social networks. This discussion is not exempt from global governance, since links between cities and international organisations are also closing the gap which has existed throughout history.

Cities not only hold possibilities; they represent a way to fulfil expectations. Citizens in general have all been very critical of the government, especially in countries where the levels of corruption are high and growing and in regions where believing in the government and its agenda becomes a threat to society. Therefore, one of the main challenges that cities need to overcome in the Wise Cities approach is the generation of trust among the citizens. Not only are local governments more capable of tackling citizens' problems because they are closer to them, but this fact also creates an atmosphere for citizens to criticise and monitor local leaders in a very powerful way. Therefore, attention and communication strategies need to be implemented with citizens so that the gap between citizens and local government is narrowed through trust.

For instance, mayors can establish more direct channels with the citizens by working in the city directly, visiting the programmes and the streets to talk to people, as well as through a correct and active use of social networks. This way many voices can be heard in a more efficient way. Also programmes at the local level are called to integrate open innovation strategies that set up channels for the participation of the citizens in the decision-making process.

Financing the new agenda

This is probably the most critical part of the new urban agenda, because the mechanisms for income generation on the local level are very limited, and mostly cities rely on national or regional government transfers to finance their more competitive and strategic programmes. Hence, the financing of the new agenda needs to address the fact that if cities want to be more independent and to develop and act as global leaders, there should be a way to start generating new income and new ways of financing big programmes.

As soon as the discussions on the SDGs started, a parallel discussion on financing urban development began. An important moment in beginning the conversation came in July 2015, when the Financing for Development Conference took place in Addis Ababa, and further commitment was made with the integration of the UN's 2016 Inter-agency Task Force (IATF) report to serve as guiding principles. Moreover, Habitat III has also planned some preparation meetings to discuss the financing of cities, such as the one which took place in Mexico City in March 2016. This important meeting portrayed the main concerns on the issue and concluded that "financing sustainable urbanization implies empowering local, metropolitan and regional governments and their private and social sector partners, to address the growing needs of the population for quality urban services and infrastructure in an equitable and inclusive manner. The New Urban Agenda should enable the appropriate rules and regulations,

qualified human resources, strategies and tools to plan and act, to ensure the adequate access to funding at local, regional, national and international level" (UN Habitat, 2016).

This is basically an open discussion that will have a very important moment next year in 2017 with the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in July under the heading "Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world".[1]

Some of these discussions open the door to the implementation of new urban development mechanisms such as TIF.[2] Cities around the world and organisations such as Metropolis Network and others have also pursued the creation of a financing organisation strictly for local and regional governments called FMDV that supports local authorities to access funding.

However, while the big discussions take place, some cities have started to experiment on their own, with their citizens, to evaluate the possibility of helping local finances through innovative financial exercises. The universal basic income initiative led by certain cities establishes that a fixed amount is given to a specific group of citizens in exchange either for nothing or for certain volunteer activities. The test is yet to give any results but it aims to generate new paradigms and to prove that states should be able to provide for their citizens.

Global actors for development

The real challenge for governance on the new urban agenda is to integrate local level institutions into the global agenda and make cities attractive and subject to national government institutions' services. Renewing the modus operandi of such institutions may be one of the greatest difficulties of this new global agenda since, "International cooperation and global governance is often viewed as the domain of the United Nations and the set of global institutions that were created almost 70 years ago" (Woods, 2015).

This is not only a one-way challenge. Cities also need to move towards a more effective way of city management. Results need to show that local governments are determined and have the capacity to generate development, so that they can be taken more seriously as global players in such a way that if they connect directly to international and multilateral institutions and their services without going through their national governments, they need to be able to reach the standards and guarantees that nations normally provide to these organisations.

Geopolitics will be becoming more complex with the integration of a more decentralised world into the discussion of power-geography relations. Therefore cities need to have more professionals and start the professionalisation of their international action.[3]

But it is not only cities who need to step up to this new reality. "It then is no surprise that much of the public debate on transnational issues such as global warming, pandemics, and socioeconomic inequalities

1. For further reading on this see: Kim, Julie. *Handbook on Urban Infrastructure Finance,* New Cities Foundation, 2016.
2. Tax increment financing.
3. Messages from AL-LAs (Alianza eurolatinoamericana de cooperación entre ciudades).

MARIA LUISA ZAPATA TRUJILLO

points to the need for front-runners and innovators to lead the way and create the political momentum necessary to overcome the limits of international politics" (Acuto, 2013).

Companies, as part of cities, integrating government strategies through the quadruple helix of interactions are becoming more and more important in the search for development. The role of big multilateral organisations is also being challenged by the fact that services need to meet local level authorities in order to keep their job and their approach to development focussed and aligned with the new global dynamics and the importance of cities. As mentioned above, organisations have to celebrate the fact that it is on the local level that they first make contact with citizens and their problems, and therefore the alignment of these organisations' agendas with local level authorities should guarantee the fact that they will be more effective while providing solutions to different challenges in cities today.

So national and local organisations need to meet halfway to appreciate each other's strengths and establish procedures that benefit and make the citizen the ultimate purpose of city development and urban planning, as well as the ultimate objective of institutional and social development programmes.

Trends

Collaboration and co-creation

Cities are networks of citizens living in the territory but also with others abroad. Cities should aim to make those connections work in a positive way in order to get more citizens involved in the designing of solutions, new services and programmes. These trends also settle in the global agenda. Today, cities are known for establishing more collaborative links, instead of competing ruthlessly. The agenda for city-to-city collaborations is more open now than ever, through knowledge sharing activities, and co-creation initiatives. However, the evolution for governance has reached a point where people, culturally and generationally, have come to understand the power of sharing ideas, sharing knowledge and sharing services and products to create better solutions. Collaboration and co-creation are simple yet powerful ways to generate new ideas in a city.

But what does a city need to provide a good platform for collaboration and co-creation to thrive and integrate it into society and into a city's planning, dynamics and economy? Why are some cities better at integrating processes that lead to open innovation and co-creation as tools to implement more assertive and comprehensive programmes than others?

Co-creation is only the beginning of things. Cities are now dealing with innovative services generating new paradigms that produce such collaborative economy trends as Uber and Airbnb. Sharing goods and services has become a new way of interacting with the city by making it easier to generate comfort with less effort and to really focus energy and resources on the things that really giving meaning and value to life.

The benefits and challenges of a shared economy need to be considered by local government authorities, who not only face a problem with national regulations, but are the ones actually dealing with the daily problems caused by the non-regularisation of such services at national level.

But it is not all good. There is also the possibility of triggering crisis and riots with citizenship collaboration. People are also getting together to generate pressure against anything that is considered to be wrong or that will lead the city down the wrong path in the mission and vision of their governments. Therefore, city leaders need to be alert and open their ears to the voices of complaint before they become a real threat to city planning and the urban agenda.

Network platforms for problem-solving

Cities and governments have come to understand the fact that connections and collaborations can be increased and can generate more impact by the possibility of establishing connections through new technologies and digital tools, where barriers and boundaries are made to vanish by the possibility of connecting people and cities easily and for a purpose. New knowledge regarding city development and urban planning is being shared through different platforms that are established by cities for cities. Examples such as Cities4Life,[4] the Metropolis Policy Transfer Platform,[5] and many more were created to generate solutions through the possibility of connecting experts and practitioners throughout the world around a specific urban challenge.

Most of these platforms connect knowledge, good practices, practitioners and experts so that their experiences are available to other cities and can be used to integrate already proven solutions into challenges and problems everywhere.

City networks

The already established city networks should also find new ways to extend their relational capital by bringing together different cities around the world. They should work towards the capitalisation of these existing communities to really catapult these networks into the new global governance mechanisms. The fact that these networks are already in place should be used as a starting point to get more and more cities linked. The challenge is to really portray and design these networks in a way that cities really can get something in return for being members of them. These networks can evolve partially or open up new possibilities to create, as suggested by Citiscope, "The next step in the evolution of this model has been for cities to take a direct role by engaging in collaborative governance arrangements. This includes developing networks and partnerships for trade, investment, knowledge and economic development between cities" (Roberts, 2016).

It is time to start appreciating this existing global governance by acknowledging the fact that "we already inhabit a 'decentralized planet of networked cities, provinces and regions [which] while obviously dominated by traditional nation-states … encompasses a wide variety

4. Platform created but Ruta N, Medellin in 2015.
5. Created by the City of Berlin as a Metropolis Network Initiative.

MARIA LUISA ZAPATA TRUJILLO

of sub-state and non-state actors, from multi-national corporations and global financial institutions to civic NGOs and global social movements'" (Curtis, 2016), and that city networks can be a good start to integrating the local dynamics unto the global governance institutions.

City-to-city learning

A model of Wise Cities should of course integrate learning as a milestone to keep growing and improving at local level. Cities that have engaged in international cooperation strategies should realise that what leads cooperation relations today is the capacity to exchange knowledge in order to provide better solutions to a city's problems. The fact that this has changed opens up new possibilities to cities that can implement mechanisms to exchange such knowledge and also to cities that, both politically and technically, can provide a strong service for knowledge sharing.

Also, this forces cities to think according to a win-win logic in order to establish international cooperation relations, since the more institutional capacity you have to establish best practices and exchange them with others, the more access you will have to other interesting practices.

Innovation districts and cross landing agreements

But we cannot assume that the evolution of governance is only to integrate cities into the global agenda. Cities today normally face more governance challenges for the fact that new structures are generated local and that these structures or districts start to take new shapes and create new connections that make even the local level authorities vulnerable to a new situation.

Cities are housing interesting economic development strategies such as innovation districts, which are and should be linked from creation with other international innovation districts. These new forms of cities enable local authorities to foster and strengthen already existing initiatives: "other such corridors cross multiple countries and will require special agreements to improve the flow of investment, people, goods and services, and co-investment between cities and firms in the critical infrastructure needed to ensure the efficiency of these flows" (Roberts, 2016).

Solutions

It is important that cities strengthen their internationalisation and foreign action properly, so that they can establish objectives in these strategies in order to become more relevant and active on a global agenda which will integrate cities more and more.

Also, every effort made at the local level to be more connected with the citizens will generate a much needed balance to be able to develop a city from a Wise City approach.

As Professor Coll states:

"Cities are more practical than ideological. Proximity to citizens make cities more aware about their problems and needs, which is a key feature for engaging citizens in political matters that directly affect their lives. Furthermore, cooperation amongst city networks favors the decentralization of decision-making and political power away from capital cities. This increases the role and influence of secondary and peripheral cities, which enrich the political processes of problem-solving with new perspectives, concerns and solutions that are close and inclusive to more citizens" (Coll, 2015).

Global governance led by cities needs to be able to generate practical mechanisms more than just strategic discussions on the global governance agenda. Just like, at national level, countries want to be leaders in the international organisations even though these organisations provide little possibility of actually acting on the specific problems the world faces. This same problem should be avoided on the local agenda or the new global governance agenda that integrates cities in a way that, by managing their role in global organisations, they can create options to work together on the problems and challenges cities face instead of relying on an organisation that wants to represent cities without establishing mechanisms for them to work on their main concerns. As the World Economic Forum addresses and refers/recommends to some international governance players, Wise Cities "should narrow their focus while deepening their engagement. They should tackle only the serious, collective-action problems, and they need to tackle these with their full concentration" (Woods, 2015).

Lessons learned and/or policy recommendations

In the configuration of the next Habitat III Conference, the importance and increasing role of cities is the core of the discussion; however, this meeting is not led by city leaders, only by national and international organisations. This concludes the need to really change paradigms on the global agenda, and the fact that the discussion is still a parallel agenda at the conference is evidence that there's a long way to go in generating new governance for cities on the global agenda.

Cities are not dependent to see a decision made by nation-states, the agenda has been active this year to come up with recommendations for a new governance for cities. City networks have reviewed the different scenarios by strengthening a previously existing network of networks known as the Global Task Force to request a new dynamic in which cities are open to participate in the United Nations. Discussions have been held and will come out in the declaration that results from the 5th UCLG Congress, World Summit of Local and Regional Leaders, held in Bogotá.

A new mechanism for participation should integrate ideas and address challenges such as the ones discussed in this paper, but also many more regarding economic development, and specific issues that are critical for cities today.

Therefore, cities will not only have the opportunity to elevate their participation, they will also be responsible for generating local capabilities to meet the required standards to integrate their voices into the global references for development. The capacities generated by nation-states will be issues on which local government will have to work promptly, such as processes for city management, data, information systems and indicators, among others.

Whatever decision is made, it is now clearer than ever that cities are called to be leading actors in the new urban development agenda. Action will take place whatever the mechanism chosen to formalise the importance of cities in the new global agenda.

References

Roberts, Brian H. "The New Urban Agenda needs to recognize a future of city-to-city networks and trade". *Citiscope*. June 14 2016, Available at: http://citiscope.org/habitatIII/commentary/2016/06/new-urban-agenda-needs-recognize-future-city-city-networks-and-trade

Acuto, M. "City leadership in global governance". *Global Governance*, *19*(3), 2013, 481–498.

Coll, J. M. "CITIES EMERGING SOFT POWER: 5 key advantages for improved global governance". CIDOB, May 2015, 1–3.

Curtis, S. "Cities and Global Governance: State Failure or a New Global Order?" *Millennium - Journal of International Studies*, 2016, 1–23. http://doi.org/10.1177/0305829816637233

UN Habitat. Mexico City Declaration for Habitat III Financing Urban Development : the Millennium Challenge, March 2016.

Woods, N. New governance architecture. *Outlook on the Global Agenda*, 2015, 60–63.