

UCLG Congress, World Summit of Local and Regional Leaders

Panel: The Future of Migrations

Durban, 14 November 2019, South Africa

Speaking Points

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1. Do national migration policy strategies need the local level for better implementation? How to build this collaboration between the national and local levels?

Distinguished Chair, Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a special honour for me to be in this distinguished panel. This is the first time ICMPD participates in the World Congress and it is an honour for us to be here represented.

At ICMPD we are veterans in the field of migration and have for over 25 years supported Regional Dialogues and migration and asylum issues. Thus, we have always promoted an evidence-based approach to comprehensive and sustainable migration policies. In this period we have seen a number of key developments in the field of migration. Among these, is the growing recognition of cities as one of the key actors in migration – a reality that has changed dramatically in the last decade.

This is not only true in terms of national governments realising that they cannot act alone. It is also about cities recognising and embracing their role as agents in migration governance.

As one of the biggest political challenges of our times, migration is too complex and nuanced to be addressed by one nation, one ministry or one city alone. All levels of governance have to work together. And we are convinced that cities have to play their part in a functioning migration governance system and have to be fully acknowledged as a player this system heavily relies upon.

It is at the local level where the reality of migration and its consequences play out and affect peoples' life, whether they are newly arrived immigrants or long-term residents of a city. Migration always has a direct impact on cities but often the cities are not fully involved in migration policy making at the national level. We should change that.

In order to address challenges and reap opportunities presented by migration, national and local governments need to work together. This is true not only in the area of migration

policies but across all other policies areas including employment, education, investment and all other areas that have a direct impact on mobility and migration.

Only through an integrated approach, we can make better migration policy a reality. To reach this goal we need a constant dialogue and exchange between all levels; and we need all levels working together on balanced, evidence-based and better functioning migration policies.

2. Multi-stakeholder partnership is one of the approaches advocated to improve migration governance at the local level. How can donors, the international community and civil society complement and strengthen local action?

A few years ago, we started a partnership with UCLG and UN-Habitat to develop an EU and SDC-funded project on Mediterranean City-to-City Migration (MC2CM).

We have been impressed by the results we were able to achieve through this strategic partnership. **We have managed to open up our organisation to new ways of working and partnering with cities.**

One year ago, Emilia represented the UCLG, its mandate and its members' views on migration at the Vienna Migration Conference, speaking to the heart of the matter to a number of migration ministers from Europe and abroad. The Vienna Migration Conference is ICMPD's annual main event and meanwhile one of the biggest migration conferences out there. And the ministers listened very carefully to what Emilia had to say. This is the spirit of partnership we want to take some steps further – always with the aim of making the whole greater than the sum of its parts.

In this regard, trust-building is essential. In a way, what we are doing with UCLG and UN-Habitat is a beginning of a process to bring cities, city associations, regional and national governments together – which is a key aspect to improving migration governance. We are also building experience and knowledge about migration at the local level, to inform our dialogues and practices in the regions.

This partnership has flourished and I am pleased to say that the city-to-city project has become a flagship for us. We are in the process of scaling up and rolling out this approach.

As an international organisation we always try to be innovative and forward-looking. This is why, through the EU-funded Mobility Partnership Facility (EU-funded facility implemented by ICMPD), we have supported an innovative initiative on legal migration that was implemented by cities. The scheme, implemented by Turin and Milan in partnership with Tunisia and Morocco, has demonstrated how the local level can leverage the needs of the private sector at city level by creating alternative and legal channels for young people. We

see this as a win-win-win situation in the best sense possible, because really everybody wins from this programme.

There is a huge potential for such initiatives that bring together the national level, the city level, the private sector and the people, be they migrants or non-migrants. We need to harness this potential, and we have to do this in a spirit of true partnership between all levels and all actors involved.

3. The international community has a fundamental role in supporting Local and Regional Authorities to strengthen their institutional and technical capacities and support international city-to-city cooperation. What approach should be recommended to put the rights of migrants at the top of the agenda?

As already mentioned, ICMPD is fully committed to broadening its support for local and regional authorities in building their capacity to address migration challenges but also to benefit from migration as a tool for local development. This is the aim of the work we are carrying out with UCLG and the spirit of our promotion of city-to-city cooperation.

In this regard, **partnerships between public bodies and the private sector should be explored much more** as a way to address important aspects that may be out of the direct scope of public intervention but have a direct impact on migrant inclusion, for example housing, employment, trade and investment.

In addition to these practical solutions and in order to bring down existing barriers to sound migration governance, we need to build strong coalitions amongst donors, international organisations and government representatives at all levels. **We need to stop paying lip service to cooperation and start enacting it in practice.** This also includes establishing standing communication lines between the various existing initiatives to avoid duplication and fragmentation, as is too often the case.

Here, I would also like to focus on one of the main challenges we currently face and that concerns us all: the narrative on migration.

Last month, we organised a regional conference on the role of arrival cities in migration for the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD). Among the main takeaways was the need to address the pressing issue of host communities expressing dissatisfaction with the way migration is playing out in their territories.

I have been particularly impressed to see how cities such as Amman, who has seen their population double in less than a decade due to migration and forced displacement, or Vienna, with a third of its population of foreign origin – do not see migration as a problem but as a task of governance they can deal with very successfully.

This is a message we need to carry forward.

But we also need to work on gaining the confidence of the public in a debate that accounts for emotions and creates opportunities for contact and exchange with migrants and refugees. Ultimately, more acceptance for immigration and for migrants rights can only be achieved through policies that try to make sure that no member of a community feels left behind; policies that create jobs, opportunities and prospects for all parts of society. We need to drive a global agenda of innovation, economic growth, social inclusion and access to opportunities, not exclusively but especially at the level of cities where economic and social exclusion can lead to tensions quite quickly. Again, we think that such an agenda can only be achieved through the cooperation between the national, the international and the local levels of governance together with the private sector. If we leave out one of those actors, we are likely to fail.

Next week at the Vienna Migration Conference we will speak about breaking the gridlock and moving forward on migration governance. There, we will present recommendations gathered from months of in-depth analysis with a range of stakeholders on how to lift cooperation on migration to the next level, within Europe and beyond. We are fully convinced that most of our recommendations need the full involvement of local and regional levels in order to work. We hope that cities will join us in this movement to make migration work better for all.