

## **Searching for Democratic Potential in Emerging Global Governance: What Are the Implications of Regional and Global Involvements of Local Governments?**

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### **Abstract**

Increasing involvement of local governments in global governance is a result of changes in the missions of both global and local government organizations. For example, the UN System mission has extended inside the borders of states as a result of its Millennium Development Goals and its Mission to Protect; and local governments are now engaged in a movement to spread democratic local governments worldwide. For many years there have been global and global region organizations of local governments. Some local government organizations that cross state borders focus on specific issues such as peace, recycling and environment. Efforts are being made to coordinate these organizations through a World Association of Cities and Local Authorities Coordination (WACLAC). There is now a UN Advisory Committee on Local Authorities. The First World Conference on City Diplomacy was held in June 2008. This paper provides an overview of these, and other, developments and examines their potential for future global governance.

### **Introduction**

The research of this political scientist is focused on international organizations, with emphasis on the United Nations system. In recent years there has been escalating participation in the UN system of actors other than governments of States,<sup>1</sup> including NGOs/civil society, business, and local governments (Alger, 2009). As a result, participants in international organizations now include those who have long been studied by separate academic fields. There is now a need to have scholars in these fields extend their agendas to include aspects of global governance. Toward this end, the purpose of this article is to provide an overview of growing involvement of local governments in international organizations in order to place these organizations on the agenda of scholars whose research is focused on the worldwide relations of cities.

Recent studies of the world relations of cities have added significantly to our growing understanding of the complexity of world relations. Here are six brief examples:

Saskia Sassen, *Cities in a World Economy*, 2006, "This book shows how some cities ...have evolved into transnational 'spaces.' As such cities have prospered, they have come to have more in common with one another than with regional centers in their own nation-states ...Such developments require all those interested in the fate of cities to rethink traditionally held views of cities as subunits of their nation-states. ..." (Sassen, 2006)

Joe R. Feagin, *The New Urban Paradigm: Critical Perspectives on the City*, 1998, "...the first major book to deal centrally and empirically with how the development of large cities is linked to the world capitalist economy, its large multinational

corporations, and its processes of economic restructuring across the globe.” (Feagin, 1998)

Paul L. Knox and Peter J. Taylor, *World Cities in a World-System, 1995*, analyzes the nature of “world cities” and their relationships with one another and with the world economy, within various conceptual frameworks. (World Cities in a World-System, 1995)

Peter J. Taylor, *World City Network: A Global Urban Analysis, 2004*, “the focus is on inter-city relations, on dependencies and interdependencies between cities.” (Taylor, 2004)

John Rennie Short and Yeong-Hyun Kim, *Globalization and the City, 1999*, they “distinguish three related aspects of globalization”, *economic globalization, cultural globalization, and political globalization*, and conclude that “global processes lead to changes in the city and cities rework and situate globalization.” (Short, 1999)

H. V. Savitch and Paul Kantor, *Cities in the International Marketplace: The Political Economy of Urban Development in North America and Western Europe, 2002*, compares ten cities in Europe and North America, with a final chapter: “Conclusions: Cities need not be leaves in the Wind.” (*Preparing for the Urban Future, 1996*; Savitch, 2002)

These six volumes, and numerous other books and articles, have greatly extended our knowledge of the increasingly complicated nature of relations among human settlements around the world. I am sure that these authors could offer very useful insights on emerging global governance by extending their agendas to include international organizations created by local governments, and their participation in the UN system.

Recently there has been growing concern about the threat that escalating globalization poses to local democracy (*Globalism and Local Democracy, 2002*). On the other hand, the escalating participation of local governments in regional and global governance suggests that democratic potential could be emerging out of local responsiveness. This search for democratic potential in emerging involvement of local authorities in global governance is rooted in my long-held belief that we must reach beyond State models in our effort to comprehend governance reaching across State boundaries (Alger, 1977). Among those offering significant theoretical insights have been David Mitrany and Ernst Haas. In a 1966 work on functionalism, Mitrany perceived cooperation across state borders as extending to more and more functions to the point that a “a web of international activities and agencies” will overlay political divisions (Mitrany, 1966). In 1970 Haas criticized his earlier state-centered approach to regional integration in Europe by perceiving the emergence of “asymmetrical overlapping”, meaning that authority drawn from States “is distributed asymmetrically among several centers, among which no single dominant one may emerge ....” with respect to “legitimacy in the eyes of citizens ... the image of infinitely tiered multiple loyalties might be the appropriate one.” (E. Haas, 1970) But it was Dahl and Tufte who first prodded me, in 1973, to ponder the democratic relevance of the growing “web of international activities and agencies” of Mitrany, and the “asymmetrical overlapping” of Haas, when they asserted “that ‘theory’ then needs to do what democratic theory has never done: to offer guidance about the appropriate relations among units.” (Dahl, 1973a) “Rather than conceiving of democracy as located in a particular kind of inclusive sovereign unit, we

must learn to conceive of democracy spreading through a set of interrelated political systems ... none of which is sovereign.” (Dahl, 1973a, p. 135)

The recent growth in regional and global involvements of local governments is offering empirical evidence that is responsive to the theoretical challenge offered by Dahl and Tufte. Local governments are now forming organizations that range from local regions, to global regions, to the entire world. Thus, in response to their dynamically changing worldwide linkages, authorities in these more limited territories are finding it necessary to develop organizations that parallel those of States. At this point we can only speculate on the degree to which they are a potential response to Dahl and Tufte’s plea for a “democracy spreading through a set of interrelated political systems ... none of which is sovereign.” (Dahl, 1973a) The primary goal of this article is to facilitate *perception* of the growing, and very complicated, involvement in global governance by local governments.

## I. Global organizations of local governments

Governments of cities throughout the world have joined together to create organizations, with some having general purposes and some more limited concerns. A typology of global organizations is presented in Table 1.

1. *Global Membership, General Purpose.* The oldest in this category was the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA) founded in 1913 in Ghent, Belgium, with its headquarters later in The Hague. Its aims were to promote local autonomy, contribute toward improvement of local administration, study questions concerning life and activities of local authorities and welfare of citizens, promote the idea of participation of the population in civic affairs, and establish and develop international municipal relations. IULA held its 36<sup>th</sup> Congress in Rio de Janeiro in May 2001, with 1100 representatives of local governments, their associations and related donor agencies and governments present from 90 countries. Included in the main points coming out of the plenary sessions were (1) the assertion that local democracy is the fundamental source of legitimacy, (2) the importance of strong local Government Associations, uniting and representing all local governments, both nationally and internationally, and (3) recognition of Municipal International Cooperation as a cost-effective and stimulating way to strengthen local government.

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**Table 1: Global Organizations of Local Governments**

(1) *General purpose*

United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)      [www.cities-localgovernments.org](http://www.cities-localgovernments.org)

(2) *Larger cities*

Metropolis is the World Association of Major Metropolises      [www.metropolis.org](http://www.metropolis.org)

(3) *Environmental focus*

ICLEI, Local Governments for Sustainability      [www.iclei.org](http://www.iclei.org)

(4) *Peace Focus*

Conference of Mayors for Peace      [www.mayorsforpeace.org](http://www.mayorsforpeace.org)

(5) *Language focus*

Association Internationales des Maires Francophones, Paris, France      [www.aimf.asso.fr](http://www.aimf.asso.fr)

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Federation Mondial des Cities Unies (FMCU), with headquarters in Paris, was active for some forty years with an agenda quite similar to IULA. Prominent on the FMCU website (no longer available) were these two missions: (1) To make States recognize the autonomy of management of local authorities and their right to establish direct cooperation with each other

at the international level. (2) To see that international organizations of local authorities are recognized as the partners of multilateral institutions. Its goals included the promotion of the establishment of democratic local authorities, defending human rights, and contribution to sustainable urban development through decentralized cooperation and exchanges of experience. In 2001 an IULA-FMCU Unity Congress was held and in 2004 they merged into United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) with headquarters in Barcelona.

UCLG's program focuses on "Increasing the role and influence of local government and its representative organisations in global governance; becoming the main source of support for democratic, effective, innovative local government close to the citizen; ensuring an effective and democratic global organisation. United Cities and Local Governments supports international cooperation between cities and their associations, and facilitates programmes, networks and partnerships to build the capacity of local governments. It promotes the role of women in local decision-making, and is a gateway to relevant information on local government across the world." (United Cities and Local Governments, 2012a)

UCLG's members include individual cities and State associations of local governments that represent all the cities and local governments in a single State. One hundred twelve Local Government Associations (LGAs) are members of UCLG, representing almost every existing LGA in the world. Over 1000 cities across 95 States are direct members of UCLG. They represent over half of the world's total population.

2. *Global Membership, Larger Cities.* METROPOLIS (World Association of Major Metropolises) is an international association of 90 metropolitan governments. "The main goal of the association is to better control the development process of metropolitan areas in order to enhance the well being of their citizens. To do this, Metropolis represents regions and metropolitan areas at the worldwide level and is recognized as a major player by large international organizations such as the UN, WHO, the World Bank and others." (metropolis.org, 2010) Beginning in a Congress in Paris in 1987, Metropolis held its eighth triannual Congress in September 2007 in Antananarivo, Madagascar. The ninety members of Metropolis are urban areas with a population of over one million inhabitants, or capital cities with more than 250,000 inhabitants. The Asia-Pacific region has the major share of Metropolis members (29), followed by Africa (23), Europe (20), Latin America & Caribbean (12), and North America (6). The North American cities are from Canada (Toronto and Montreal), and Mexico (Guadalajara, Mexico (State of), Monterrey and Puebla). Metropolis has five Standing Commissions: (1) Eco-Regions, (2) Financing of Urban Services and Infrastructure, (3) Comprehensive Neighborhood Regeneration, (4) Urban Mobility Management, (5) Metropolitan Performance Measurement, and (5) Water Management.

Very significant is the recent collaboration among the three global membership organizations with a broad agenda. First, IULA and FMCU merged, forming United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) with headquarters in Barcelona. Metropolis also has its headquarters in Barcelona and has become the Metropolitan Section of UCLG.

3. *Global Membership Environmental Focus.* Founded in 1990, Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI) is dedicated to the prevention and solution of local, regional and global environmental problems through local action. It was established through the partnership of the UN Environment Program (UNEP), the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA) and the Center for Innovative Diplomacy (CID). These three organizations reflect territorial complexity. They include a global governmental organization of States (UNEP), a global organization of local governments (IULA) and an NGO located in California (CID).

ICLEI is an international association of local governments and national and regional local government organizations that have made a commitment to sustainable development.

“More than 630 cities, towns, counties, and their associations worldwide comprise ICLEI's growing membership. ICLEI works with these and hundreds of other local governments through international performance-based, results-oriented campaigns and programs. We provide technical consulting, training, and information services to build capacity, share knowledge, and support local government in the implementation of sustainable development at the local level. Our basic premise is that locally designed initiatives can provide an effective and cost-efficient way to achieve local, national, and global sustainability objectives.” (ICLEI, 1995) With a World Secretariat in Toronto, ICLEI has regional offices in Cape Town (South Africa), Tokyo, Jeju City (Republic of Korea), Freiburg (Germany), Buenos Aires, Toronto, Oakland, CA, Melbourne, Noida (India), and Manila. ICLEI has a World Congress every three years, the 2006 Congress was hosted by the City of Cape Town, South Africa.

4. *Global Membership, Peace Focus.* Another organization with a global policy focus is the Conference of Mayors for Peace, initiated by the mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1982. General Conferences are held every four years. The seventh was held in August 2005 in Nagasaki. The key theme was “Nuclear weapons abolition is in our hands” (Mayors for Peace Secretariat, 2000) In September 2011, Mayors for Peace had 4984 member cities from 151 countries and regions. In March 1990, the Mayors Conference was officially registered as a UN NGO related to the Department of Public Information. In May 1991, it became a Category II NGO (currently called a NGO in "Special Consultative Status") registered with the UN Economic and Social Council

“The Conference of Mayors for Peace aims at raising consciousness worldwide about the abolition of nuclear weapons through close cooperation among all the cities that approved the Program to Promote the Solidarity of Cities ... and contribution to establishment of the lasting world peace through solving problems such as hunger and poverty, refugees and human rights, and environmental protection”. (Mayors for Peace Secretariat, 2000)

5. *Global Membership, Language Focus* The Association Internationales des Maires Francophones (AIMF) has a quite distinctive focus. It brings together mayors, and other city officials, from cities in which French is either the official language or widely used. Founded in 1979 in Quebec, the organization has more than 150 members in 47 States that are located in Europe, Africa, the Pacific, Southeast Asia, the Caribbean and Canada. The forty-first General Assembly was held in Yerevan, Armenia in May 2011.

“The AIMF develops its programs around two complementary themes: building municipal capacity, and support for populations. This programming focuses on ten sectors of intervention: modernization of municipal management; registry offices; pay and bookkeeping; support for mayors; training; municipal infrastructures; urban development; culture, youth and education; health; and emergency assistance.” (Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, 2012)

## II. Global region organizations of local governments outside of Europe

There are also many global region organizations of municipalities. Because of the large, and very diverse, number of organizations in Europe, we have placed those outside of Europe in a separate category. Table 2 lists five organizations outside of Europe that range across all other continents, including United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLGA), Arab Towns Organization (ATO), Organization of Islamic Capitals and Cities (OICC), Latin American Federation of Cities, Municipalities and Associations (FLACMA), and Regional Network of Local Authorities for the Management of Human Settlements (Asia and Pacific, CITYNET).

Before 1998 there were three continental local government associations in Africa, the predominantly Anglophone African Union of Local Authorities (AULA); the largely francophone Union des Villes Africaines (UVA); and the solely Portuguese Uniao dos Cidades y Capitaes Lusofono Africana (UCCLA). In 1998, at the First Africities Summit in Abidjan,

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**Table 2: Organizations of Local Governments in Global Regions Outside of Europe**

United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLGA)	<a href="http://www.uclgafrika.org">www.uclgafrika.org</a>
Arab Towns Organization (ATO)	<a href="http://www.ato.net">www.ato.net</a>
Organization of Islamic Capitals and Cities (OICC)	<a href="http://www.oicc.org">www.oicc.org</a>
Latin American Federation of Cities, Municipalities and Associations (FLACMA)	<a href="http://www.flacma.org">www.flacma.org</a>
CITYNET (Asia and Pacific)	<a href="http://www.citynet-ap.org">www.citynet-ap.org</a>

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Cote d'Ivoire, a resolution was passed toward the end of creating a Pan-African association of local government to overcome the colonial legacy of language and cultural barriers. In 2000, at the Second Africities Summit held in Windhoek, Namibia, the decision of the 1st Africities Summit was endorsed. In 2003, at the Third Africities Summit in Yaounde, Cameroon, an interim executive committee was established to drive the unification process. The Founding Conference of the United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLGA) was held at the Tshwabac Centre, in Tshwane, South Africa, in May 2005. "The Founding Congress of the UCLGA was unique and historic in that it was an event which introduced, for the first time in the history of the continent, a local government organisation based not on geographic, religious, cultural or linguistic criteria, but on a set of common challenges and the collective destiny of the continent. In facilitating the establishment of the UCLGA the Congress reclaimed the dignity of African people at the daily level of their existence, in the process recalling the existence of a highly accomplished civilisation in the Africa of the past." (United Cities and Local Governments, 2012b)

The Arab Towns Organization (ATO), established in Kuwait in 1967, has members from twenty-two states. Membership includes Arab cities, "any institution related to the activities of the organization", and individuals who are "employed persons in the area who are interested in the work of the organization and its activities or researchers in the education and research organizations." (General Assembly of the Arab Towns Organization, 2012) The Headquarters of ATO is located in Kaifan, Kuwait. A General Congress meets every three years. "The Organization has no political activity or involvement and does not interfere in the affairs of any State. Its activities are focused on the achievement of its goals within the framework of sustainable development of human settlements." (General Assembly of the Arab Towns Organization, 2012) ATO is an affiliate member of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), an association of fifty-seven Islamic States.

The eight goals of Arab Towns Organization (ATO) are: (1) Preservation of the identity of the Arab city, (2) Reinforcement of Arab local authorities and encourage decentralization, (3) Raising the level of municipal services and utilities in Arab cities, (4) Foster cooperation and exchange of expertise between Arab cities, (5) Adoption of a comprehensive plan to guide the activities and services the city on the basis of their economic, social, cultural and environmental, (6) Achieve sustainable development in Arab cities, (7) Development and modernization of municipal and local institutions and promote the development and standardization of legislation and municipal systems, (8) Help member cities to achieve development projects by extending soft loans. (General Assembly of the Arab Towns Organization, 2012)

The Organization of Islamic Capitals and Cities (OICC) describes itself as “an international non-governmental and non-profitable Organization.” (Organization of Islamic Capitals and Cities (OICC), 2012) Founded in 1980, it is also an affiliate of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). The members of OICC are 141 capitals and cities from fifty-four States in Asia, Africa, Europe and South America (Suriname) that are located in States that are members of the OIC. The headquarters of OICC are located in the Holy City of Makkah and the city of Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The General Conference of OICC convenes every three years. The OICC web site states that “the Organization has no political activity or involvement and does not interfere in the affairs of any State. Its activities are focused on the achievement of its goals within the framework of sustainable development of human settlements.” (Organization of Islamic Capitals and Cities (OICC), 2012) Its goals are “(1) Consolidation of cordiality, brotherhood, and friendship between members, (2) Preservation of the identity and the heritage of Islamic capitals and cities, (3) Support, coordination and expansion of cooperation scope between members, (4) Endeavor to establish and develop comprehensive urban norms, systems, and plans that would serve the growth and prosperity of members for the promotion of their economic, social, cultural, environmental and urban conditions. (5) Endeavor to promote the standards of development, services and municipal utilities in member capitals and cities, and (6) Promotion and development of capacity building programs in member capitals and cities.” (Organization of Islamic Capitals and Cities (OICC), 2012)

The Latin American Federation of Cities, Municipalities and Associations (FLACMA) was founded in 1981. One thousand participants attended the 3rd Congress of FLACMA at Florianopolis, Brazil, on 25-27 July, 2007, around the theme “The American Experience: Social Inclusion and Cooperation”. Mayors and councillors were joined by academics and technical experts to debate on key issues affecting development in the region, with the spotlight on the leadership role for local governments and the importance of involving civil society in the policy making processes. Julio Pereyra, Mayor of Florencio Valera, Argentina took over the Presidency of FLACMA until the next regional congress which will be in Mexico City. FLACMA is a section of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG).

A regional Congress of Local Authorities for the Development of Human Settlements in Asia and the Pacific was held in 1982 in Yokohama, Japan, under the sponsorship of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), UN-Habitat, and the City of Yokohama. The Congress stressed the need to enhance co-operative links between local authorities for the development of human settlements and to promote partnership with other urban stakeholders. To address these issues, the Congress adopted the Yokohama Declaration, which was disseminated worldwide. A follow-up Congress in Nagoya, Japan in 1987 established CITYNET, which had its first Congress in 1989 in Yokohama.

From 24 members at its inception in 1987, CITYNET has grown to 107 members from 22 countries/regions. Full members are 67 cities in Asia and the Pacific. Associate members include 2 cities outside the region (Lyon, France and Ancona, Italy) and 38 organizations (25 community-based, 9 national, 3 development authorities and 1 private company.). CITYNET is governed by a General Council and Executive Committee, while day-to-day administration of the Network is conducted by the Secretariat based in Yokohama. CITYNET attempts to “bridge the gap between local governments, their national counterparts, non-governmental and international organizations.” (CITYNET, 2009) In order to help local governments provide better services to citizens, each year CITYNET, “organizes around 25 activities, including seminars and training programs, which address burning issues in urban planning and development.”(CITYNET, 2009) The TCDC (Technical Cooperation between Cities in Developing Countries) program helps develop partnerships between Asia-

Pacific cities “that foster best practices in urban governance and city development. Over 40 local governments have benefited from the TCDC program in the last decade.” (CITYNET, 2009) CITYNET has consultative status with ECOSOC.

Other organizations of local authorities exist within these regions, but space limitations require us to limit our detailed analysis to one region. Because Europe has the most extensive array of organizations of local authorities, it offers an extensive typology of organizations.

### **III. Organizations of local and local region governments in European region**

It is certainly not a surprise that the most extensive array of organizations of local governments flowing across State boundaries is found within Europe. Although we have not made an exhaustive investigation, the fifteen organizations listed in Table 3 reveal remarkable diversity in local government collaboration that is taking place across state borders in one world region. We have grouped them into seven types. First, there is an organization of local regions, the Assembly of European Regions (AER), created in 1985. It describes itself as “the political forum and representative organization” of the regions of Europe which is “committed to democracy, solidarity and the development of interregional cooperation in Europe.” (Assembly of European Regions, n.d.) Its members include 260 regions and 13 interregional organizations that reach across 33 states. The AER defines regions as “the territorial body of public law established at the level immediately below that of the State and endowed with political self-government.” (Assembly of European Regions, n.d.) The interregional organizations reach across state borders. The ten “geographical interregional organizations” include mountain regions, coastal regions and border regions. The three “sectoral interregional organizations” are wine-producing, fruit/vegetable growing/horticultural, and local democracies agencies.

Second are two organizations of both local regions and local municipalities. The Council of European Municipalities was founded in Geneva in 1951 by a group of European mayors; later, it opened its ranks to local regions and became the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR). It involves forty-two State and regional associations of local governments from thirty European States, including the three Baltic States and Israel. “CEMR works to promote a united Europe that is based on local and regional self government and democracy, ...to exchange experience at local and regional level and to cooperate with partners in other parts of the world.” (Council of European Municipalities and Regions, 2012)

The Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe was created in 1957 and later became the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities. In 1994 the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities succeeded the Conference as a Council of Europe consultative body. It has a Chamber of Local Authorities and a Chamber of Regions. The Congress has 318 full members and 318 substitute members that represent over 200,000 European municipalities and regions that are grouped by State delegation and by political group. A major achievement of the Congress is the European Charter of Local Self-Government, opened for signature by Council of Europe member States on 15 October 1985, it came into force on 9 September 1988. “This is the instrument in which the signatory States undertake to recognise the principle of local self-government in domestic legislation” (The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, 2012)



**Table 3: Organizations of Local and Local Region Governments in European Region***I. Local Regions*

Assembly of European Regions (AER), Strasbourg [www.aer.eu](http://www.aer.eu)

*II. Local and Local Regions*

Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), Paris and Brussels  
[www.ccre.org](http://www.ccre.org)

Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, Strasbourg  
[www.coe.int/t/congress](http://www.coe.int/t/congress)

*III. Large Cities*

EUROCITIES, Brussels [www.eurocities.org](http://www.eurocities.org)

*IV. Specific Type of Local Region*

## 1. Border Regions

Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) Gronau, Germany  
[www.aebr-ageg.de](http://www.aebr-ageg.de)

## 2. Mountain Regions

Euro. Asso. of Local and Regional Auth. of Mountain Regions (AEM) Strasbourg  
[www.sdv.fr/aem](http://www.sdv.fr/aem)

Asso. of Working Communities of the Alpine Regions, Innsbruck, Austria  
[www.argealp.org](http://www.argealp.org)

## 3. Maritime Regions

Conf. on Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe (CPMR), Rennes, France  
[www.cpmr.org](http://www.cpmr.org)

Commission Intermediterraneenne, Livorno, Italy  
Medcities, Network of Mediterranean coastal cities, Barcelona [www.medicities.org](http://www.medicities.org)

Union of Baltic Cities, Gdansk, Poland [www.ubc.net](http://www.ubc.net)

Transmarche region, Southeast England/Northeast France

*V. Specific Issue Focus*

Association of Cities and Regions for Recycling, Brussels(70 members)  
[www.acrplus.org](http://www.acrplus.org)

Climate Alliance, Frankfurt am Main (1200 members) [www.climateforchange.net](http://www.climateforchange.net)

Energie-Cites, Besancon, France (150 members) [www.energie-cites.org](http://www.energie-cites.org)

*VI. Local, Local Region, NGOs, Individuals, and others*

Asso. of Local Democracy Agencies (ALDA) Council of Euro.  
<http://alda-europe.eu/alda>

*VII. External Links*

European Commission, European Union  
URB-AL Program for urban areas in Europe and Latin America (680 members)  
<http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/latin-america/regional-cooperation>

Third, EUROCITIES, founded in 1986, is an organization of over 130 cities with a population of more than 250,000, from over 30 European States. Cities within the European Union become full members, other European cities become associate members. Local governments and organizations not eligible to become full or associate members are allowed Associated Partnership. Companies and businesses are allowed to become Associated Business Partners. EUROCITIES is involved in a wide range of issues “including: economic development and cohesion policy, provision of public services, environment, transport and mobility, employment and social affairs, culture, education, information and knowledge society, governance and international cooperation.”(Euro Cities, 2012) The most important decisions are made at the Annual General Meeting (AGM), where each member city is

represented by its Mayor. It “calls on the European Union to formally recognize the principle of local self-government as defined in the European Charter of Local Self-Government”, to develop mechanisms strengthening “cooperation between the various spheres of governance (local, regional, State and European)”, and to “provide channels for a systematic and transparent dialogue between the European Commission and representatives of local and regional public authorities.” (Euro Cities, 2012)

Fourth, there are organizations with regional membership limited to specific kinds of regions. The first is devoted to regions that are divided by the borders of states. The Association of European Border Regions (AEBR), with headquarters in Gronau, Germany, was founded in 1971 and now has sixty members. In 1985 it implemented a European Charter of Border and Cross Border Regions with these opening sentences: “Borders are ‘scars of history.’ Cross-border cooperation helps to reduce the disadvantages of these borders, overcome the outlying national location and improve living conditions for the population.” (AEBR, 2012) This reminds us that state borders have often arbitrarily divided people by placing them on opposite sides of borders. At the same time, these regions tend to be located in a peripheral position, distant from centers of decision-making by States. In a study of *“Co-operation Between Local Authorities in Frontier Regions”*, Professor Orianne of Louvain has described their predicament in poetic fashion:

“Time and mankind patently strive to put together again what treaties and systems of law once tore asunder to meet the requirements of a particular type of political organization.” (Orianne, 1973)

Regional membership organizations are also formed by local governments that must cope with common geographic features that transcend State borders. Two examples of mountain border organizations are the European Association of Local and Regional Authorities of Mountain Regions (AEM) with headquarters in Strasbourg, and the Association of Working Communities of the Alpine Regions located in Innsbruck.

Local governments located on a maritime border have joined to form a Conference on Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe (CPMR). Local governments from all seven European maritime basins, the Baltic, North Sea, Atlantic, Mediterranean, Balkans, Black Sea and the Islands formed CPMR in 1973. With headquarters in Rennes, France, 146 regions from twenty-six European states participate. One of the goals of CPMR is to promote “greater involvement of the regional players in European integration.” (CRPM, 2005) There are also three organizations formed by local governments in a number of States that share a common maritime border, the Commission Intermediteraneene (Livorno, Italy), Medcities, a network of Mediterranean coastal cities (Barcelona), and the Union of Baltic Cities (Gdansk, Poland).

Finally, local governments on each side of the Straits of Dover have formed the Transmanche Region. It was initiated in 1987 by the Kent County Council and the Nord-Pas de Calais in anticipation of the construction of the Channel Tunnel, but now involves more local district councils in these two regions. (Church & Reid, 1999)

Fifth, associations have also been developed among regions in different States who contend with similar public policy issues. Aygen Aykac reports that there are over thirty of these transborder structures linking local and regional authorities in Western Europe. Listed in Table 5 are three examples, one focused on recycling (70 members), one on climate (900 members) and one on energy (100 members). (Aykac, 1994)

Sixth, there is great diversity in the 146 members, from 23 States, of the Association of Local Democracy Agencies (ALDA): local governments (34.5%), local region authorities (9%), NGOs (15.2%), associations of local authorities (10.3%), statutory members (8.3%),

individuals (15.9%) and others (6.9). The four main foci of “ALDA’s work are (1) field work in South East Europe and the Southern Caucasus through the 12 Local Democracy Agencies (LDA), (2) best practice exchanges and awareness-raising with partners and members throughout Europe, (3) technical assistance in transitional countries in Europe, (4) fostering local governance and active participation.” (ALDA, 2012) The first LDA was founded at the initiative of the Council of Europe’s Congress of Local and Regional Authorities in Subotica, Serbia, in 1993. At first the work was focused on crisis management and humanitarian aid, but it “gradually shifted to democratic reform and capacity building to guarantee a smooth and stable transition to democracy and to assist the two regions in applying European standards in all areas of life.” (ALDA, 2012) ALDA has joined the 400 international non-governmental organizations in the Conference of INGOs in the Council of Europe. The Conference is one of the main institutions of the Council of Europe, along with the Committee of Ministers, the Parliamentary Assembly, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, the Commissioner of Human Rights and the Court of Human Rights.

Seventh, we have included Urb-AI, a project of the European Commission, in Table 3, in order to illustrate the emergence of local government projects that defy easy categorization. Created in 1995, “Urb-AI involves local authorities in urban areas and other regions in the European Union and Latin America.” The objective of Urb-AI is “to develop networks of decentralized cooperation between local authorities on concrete topics and problems of urban local development.” It has brought together 680 local authorities on projects involving drugs, environment, citizen participation, poverty alleviation, transport, safety, town planning, economic development, the information society or democracy. Biennial meetings have been held in Lisbon and Rio de Janeiro. More than 2500 local authorities, associations, NGO, trade unions, universities or companies are involved in thirteen networks on different subjects.

Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks offer a useful context for pondering the significance of European organizations of local governments in their report on Eurobarometer surveys in 1991 and 1995 of the local, regional and State attachments of citizens in all fifteen members of the European Community, with the exception of Luxembourg. (Hooge & Marks, 2001) The surveys reveal that in France, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Sweden attachment to country is matched by subnational attachment and in the “federal or federalizing societies of Austria, Belgium, Spain and (western) Germany, country attachment is exceeded significantly by regional attachment. Only in Denmark, Finland, Ireland, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom is attachment to country significantly greater than a regional or local attachment.” (Hooge & Marks, 2001, p. 54) These survey results suggest that many Europeans have opportunities to fulfill their “subnational attachments” through participation in organizations of local authorities.

Also offering insight when assessing the democratic potential of the organizations in Table 3 are Bruno S. Frey and Reiner Eichenberger’s treatise on the usefulness of Functional, Overlapping and Competing Jurisdictions (FOCJ) in fulfilling the needs of citizens. FOCJ permit the emergence of political bodies whose jurisdiction corresponds to the borders of tasks to be fulfilled. Inevitably these jurisdictions are overlapping and may create competition between different functional jurisdictions. “The basic idea is to establish competition among jurisdictions.” (Frey, 1999) Certainly the organizations with an issue and local region focus in Table 3 can qualify as FOCJ. Participation by local citizens in these FOCJ offers them an opportunity to impact functional international organizations focused on the same political problem. Thus, over three decades later, Frey and Eichenberger are employing FOCJ as a means for understanding the same phenomena approached by Mitrany as a functional “web of international activities and agencies” that overlay political divisions and by Haas as “asymmetrical overlapping”. (Frey, 1999)

#### IV. Direct Participation of Cities and Local Regions in European Governance.

We return again to The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE) because it represents the most penetrating involvement of local governments in governance across State boundaries. Although advisory, it is a third component, along with the Parliamentary Assembly and the Committee of Ministers, in the Council of Europe. It was established in 1994 as a consultative body of the Council of Europe (COE), to help new member States to make progress in establishing effective local and regional self-government. CLRAE has two chambers, the Chamber of Local Authorities and the Chamber of Regions, comprised of 291 members and 291 substitute members that represent more than 200,000 European local and regional governments. The delegations from each member State of the COE, composed of only elected local and regional government representatives, are representative of the various types of local and regional government in each member State.

Projects of CLRAE (Table 4) include the Program of Local Democracy Agencies (LDA), established in 1993. Local Democracy Agencies are based on a partnership of at least three towns in member States of the Council of Europe. Under the responsibility of a Delegate appointed by the LDA “dialogue and exchanges between citizens” is promoted with the “aim to promote local democracy in a broad sense.” (LDA, 1993) LDAs are located in Yugoslavia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Macedonia. Local democracy is also facilitated by several other European conventions. Another project of CLRAE is the Local Democracy Program (LODE),

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**Table 4: Direct participation of cities and local regions in regional governance in Europe**

Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE)	<a href="http://www.coe.fr/cplre">www.coe.fr/cplre</a>
Chamber of Local Authorities	
Chamber of Regions	
CLRAE Projects	
Program of Local Democracy Agencies	<a href="http://www.idaaonline.org">www.idaaonline.org</a>
Local Democracy (LODE)	
European Network of Training Org. for local and regional authorities (ENTO)	
European Outline Convention of Transfrontier Cooperation	
European Outline Convention of the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at the Local Level	
Charter for Participation of Young People in Municipal and Regional Affairs	

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established in 1992. LODE is a European network of training organizations for local and regional governments. In June 2002 it held a seminar in Paris on "Improving Local Public Services in Europe through Training". Closely linked to the goals of LDA and LODE is the European Network of Training Organizations for Local and Regional Authorities (ENTO).

CLRAE has played a role in the development of two conventions and a charter establishing standards for local participation in Europe. The European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation recognizes the right of local and regional authorities to cooperate across frontiers in providing public services and environmental protection. Rights of immigrants are protected by The European Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at the Local Level. There is also a Charter for Participation of Young People in Municipal and Regional Affairs.

## **V. World Association of Cities and Local Authorities Coordination (WACLAC)**

There has recently been an effort to develop a global coalition of organizations of local governments that transcend the borders of States. On the eve of the HABITAT II Conference of the United Nations on Human Settlements, held in Istanbul in June 1996, international local government organizations called together the first-ever World Assembly of Cities and Local Authorities. The World Assembly emphasized the importance of ongoing coordination of the movement of cities and local authorities worldwide and the need for local government input to the United Nations. The World Association of Cities and Local Authorities Coordination (WACLAC) was soon formed in Paris in September 1996.

At a meeting in Nairobi in February 2001 a WACLAC Constitution was approved by the founding members: Arab Towns Organization, CITYNET, United Towns Organization, IULA, METROPOLIS, Network of Local Government Associations of Latin America, SUMMIT, and the Union of African Towns. The constitution obligates WACLAC to work for responsible and effective local self-government for sustainable development, to strengthen the input from local communities into WACLAC and to represent the local government sector in the international arena, particularly in the United Nations System.

## **VI. Transnational Discourse Communities**

At the same time that local officials are participating in the activities of international organizations of cities and in their efforts to influence agendas of the UN system, there is obviously a feedback impact on local government. One study asserts that local government is being reshaped in the global discourse known as New Public Management (NPM), a "hegemonic discourse" since the 1980s. It evolved from "international administrative experts working for the UN, [was] taken up by the Carter administration and then processed and refined by the OECD." (Salskov-Iversen, Hansen, & Bislev, 2000) "Not only are distant localities being linked together by very real and rapidly increasing flows of capital, flexible production processes, and people in motion; they are also becoming connected through networks of expertise." (Bislev, Salskov-Iversen, & Hansen, 2002; Salskov-Iversen et al., 2000, p. 185) Obviously, many international relations scholars would refer to these networks of expertise as epistemic communities. (P. Haas, 1992)

## **VII. Local Governments in the UN system.**

Surprising, as it might seem for an organization of States, there is now increasing involvement of local governments in the UN System. Cities were on the agenda of Secretary General Kofi Annan, who said that local governments should be given more authority to deal with problems that come with explosive growth as the world enters the "urban millennium." UN-Habitat (UN Human Settlements Program), established in 1977, "is mandated by the UN General Assembly to promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities with the goal of providing adequate shelter for all. ... It has a special relationship with local authorities, including Mayors, Councillors, and their municipalities in countries around the world to strengthen and maintain dialogue with central and local governments." (United Nations, 2012a) In 1977 an effort was made to permit direct participation of local authorities

in the work of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat. Although this proposal was not accepted, it promoted discussion in which member States agreed to include mayors and other local government officials in their UN-Habitat Governing Council delegations.

Table 5, Examples of Local Governments in the UN System, lists first the involvement of UN-Habitat in local governance issues. A UN Advisory Committee of Local Authorities (UNACLA) was established in Venice, in January 2000, at a meeting called by the Executive Director of UN-Habitat, and attended by mayors from all over the world and presidents of international associations of local governments. (“UN Center for Human Settlements,” 2001)

In 2004 UN-Habitat and United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) held a meeting in Barcelona on the theme of “Local Governments, Partners for Development.” At this meeting the Executive Director of UN-Habitat and six mayors selected by UCLG signed an “Agreement of Cooperation” aimed at expanding their collaboration on issues such as: (1) the Global Campaign on Urban Governance, (2) the Global Observatory of Local Democracy and Decentralization, (3) Localizing the Millennium Development Goals, (4) the international dialogue on Decentralization, and (5) UNACLA.

The Best Practices and Local Leadership Program (BLP) was established in 1997. “It is a global network of government agencies of states, local authorities and their associations, professional and academic institutions and grassroots organisations dedicated to the identification and exchange of successful solutions for sustainable development. BLP partners are specialized in such areas as housing and urban development, urban governance, environmental planning and management, architecture and urban design, economic development, social inclusion, crime prevention, poverty reduction, women, youth, cultural heritage, municipal finance and management, infrastructure and social services.” (United Nations, 2012b) The policy implications and lessons learned from Best Practices are incorporated into Habitat’s *State of the World’s Cities Report*.

Together with UN-Habitat’s Urban Indicators Program, the BLP forms the Global Urban Observatory (GUO), UN-Habitat’s facility for monitoring global trends in sustainable urban development and evaluating progress in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, adopted in 1996 for the achievement of sustainable development of the world’s urban areas and Agenda 21 adopted at a 1992 Conference on Environment and Development. The Localizing Agenda 21 Programme (LA21) aims to help local authorities in secondary towns to achieve more sustainable development by implementing an environmental planning and management process to identify and address priority issues.(UNHabitat, n.d.)

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**Table 5: Examples of Local Governments in the UN System**

UN-Habitat UN Advisory Committee on Local Auth. (created, 2000)

[www.unchs.org/Committee](http://www.unchs.org/Committee)

Best Practices and Local Leadership Program (BLP) (created, 1997)

[www.unchs.org](http://www.unchs.org)

Global Urban Observatory (GUO)

World Urban Forum (1<sup>st</sup> session, April-May 2002)

Advisory Group of Experts on Decentralisation (AGRED) (1<sup>st</sup> session. 2004)

Sustainable Cities Program (SCP)

Municipal Development Program (MDP)

Global Campaign on Urban Governance

Urban Sanitation and Solid Waste Management

Millennium Development Goal, 11, improve the lives of slum dwellers

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World Bank Municipal Development Program	<a href="http://www.worldbank.org">www.worldbank.org</a>
Local Economic Development Specialists (LED) in Urban Development Sector	
UNDP Urban Management Program	<a href="http://www.undp.org">www.undp.org</a>
World Alliance of Cities Against Poverty	
Colloquiums of Mayors, 1995 and 1997	<a href="http://www.undp.org/hiv/mayors/worldalliance">www.undp.org/hiv/mayors/worldalliance</a>
UNESCO The City: Network of Cultures	
UNICEF Mayors Defenders of Children Initiative, periodical meetings	<a href="http://www.unicef.org">www.unicef.org</a>
International Child Friendly Cities	<a href="http://www.childfriendlycities.org">www.childfriendlycities.org</a>
WHO Healthy Cities Program	
UNEP Environmental Management Systems (EMS) for Local Authorities	
UNAIDS Alliance of Mayors Initiative for Community Action on AIDS at the Local Level	<a href="http://www.amicaall.org">www.amicaall.org</a>
UNCDF Local Development Program	
UNITAR Decentralized Cooperation Program (DCP)	
UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK)	<a href="http://www.un.org/kosovo">www.un.org/kosovo</a>
UN-Habitat/World Bank Cities Alliance: Cities Without Slums	<a href="http://www.citiesalliance.org">www.citiesalliance.org</a>
UN-HABITAT/UNDP Urban Management Programme (UMP)	
UN-HABITAT/UNEP Sustainable Cities Programme (SCP)	

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The Global Urban Observatory (GUO) helps governments of States, local governments and civil society organizations develop and apply policy-oriented urban indicators, statistics and other urban information. The Global Urban Observatory Network (GUONet) is a worldwide information and capacity-building network established by UN-Habitat to help implement the Habitat Agenda at State and local levels. The local and State Urban Observatories in the network are governmental agencies, research centers and educational institutions that are designated as the "workshops" where monitoring tools are developed and used for policy-making. A Local Urban Observatory for a city or town is the focal point for urban policy development and planning.

Two years after UNACLA was formed, "a World Urban Forum met to examine one of the most pressing issues facing the world today: rapid urbanisation and its impact on communities, cities, economies and policies. It is projected that in the next fifty years, two-thirds of humanity will be living in towns and cities. A major challenge is to minimize burgeoning poverty in cities, improve the urban poor's access to basic facilities such as shelter, clean water and sanitation and achieve environment-friendly, sustainable urban growth and development." (UNHabitat, n.d.-a) It is now a biennial gathering that involves non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations, urban professionals, academics, local governments and State and international associations of local governments.

In 2004, UN-Habitat's Executive Director established an Advisory Group of Experts on Decentralisation (AGRED) "to guide the international dialogue on decentralisation and provide advice on strengthening local authorities around the world." (UNHabitat, n.d.-b) The inaugural AGRED meeting was held in Gatineau, Canada in March 2004, at the invitation of the Mayor, Yves Ducharme, who is President of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM). AGRED will operate as a sub-committee of the United Nations Advisory Committee of Local Authorities (UNACLA).

UN-HABITAT has been charged by the UN General Assembly to help governments meet the Millennium Development Goal, target 11, of improving the lives of 100 million slum dwellers by 2020. The General Assembly mandated UN-HABITAT to monitor the implementation of this goal, including designing innovations to collect, manage and analyze urban indicators and to assist local authorities with policy formulation.

Other UN-Habitat activities with an urban focus are the Sustainable Cities Program, a Municipal Development Program, a Global Campaign on Urban Governance and an Urban Sanitation and Solid Waste Management program.

Examples involving nine other agencies in the UN System reveal the increasingly widespread involvement of local governments in the UN System.

(1) UNDP has created a World Alliance of Cities Against Poverty and an Urban Management Program. The Urban Management Program has produced *Delivering the Goods: Building Local Government Capacity to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals: A Practitioner's Guide*, from UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) Experience in Least Developed Countries. (Shotton & Winter, 2006) UNDP has also sponsored Colloquiums of Mayors in 1995 (before the Copenhagen Social Summit) and in 1977 (before the International Conference for Sustainable Growth and Equity.)

(2) UNICEF has held periodical meetings of mayors in its Mayors Defenders of Children Initiative. It is also committed to strengthening networking of local efforts to create "child friendly cities." This effort is supported by a secretariat in Florence, Italy.

(3) "UNESCO The City: Network of Cultures" recognizes that cities attract people from around the world, thereby producing the "richest possible cultural mixes. However, this traditional foyer of cultural exchange and innovation also produces most of the ills of modern society: unemployment, poverty, crime, inadequate infrastructures and services, and environmental problems."(UNESCO, 1995) In response UNESCO is creating "decentralized data infrastructures" to assist local authorities in coping with these problems. This data includes "more than 800 best practices in urban harmony" in a "Cities for Peace" network. (UNESCO, 1995)

(4) WHO works with local authorities, mainly in Europe, in its Healthy Cities Program.

(5) UNEP has established an Environmental Management System (EMS) for Local Authorities with the goal of facilitating the implementation of an Environmental Management System in local communities.

(6) UNAIDS has establish an Alliance of Mayors Initiative for Community Action on AIDS at the Local Level.

(7) The Local Development Program of the UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) is based on the belief that "achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and eradicating poverty needs to be done at the local level and thus requires the involvement of local authorities." (United Nations, 2012c)



(8) The UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) has a Decentralized Cooperation Program (DCP) that “trains local actors in order to enhance their capacity to implement international conventions and the Millennium Development Goals. Recognizing and promoting the role of local authorities in achieving international development goals locally is the core of our mission. DCP is a hub for information, communication, and training between United Nations Agencies and local actors such as local authorities, public and private companies, civil society and academia.” (United Nations, 2012d). DCP has twelve International Training Centers for Local Authorities/Actors (CIFAL) around the world.

(9) The UN Interim Administration Mission In Kosovo (UNMIK) has enlisted the assistance of local governments in Europe, in cooperation with the European Union, in efforts to develop local democracy in Kosovo.

The widespread involvement of local authorities in the UN System is also reflected by programs that involve collaboration between UN-Habitat and other organizations in the UN System. Here are three examples: UN-Habitat joined with the World Bank in 1999 in launching Cities Alliance: Cities Without Slums, committed to improving the living conditions of the urban poor. The Consultative Group, the Alliance’s board of directors, consists of financial contributors to the Cities Alliance Trust Fund and the political heads of the two global organizations of local governments, UCLG, and Metropolis. The Consultative Group is co-chaired by the World Bank’s vice president for Sustainable Development and UN-Habitat’s executive director. Members of the Consultative Group in 2007 also included two other agencies in the UN System, UNDP and ILO, the Asian Development Bank, and also representatives of the Netherlands, Japan, France, Denmark, and the United Kingdom. The Alliance Secretariat, housed at World Bank headquarters, carries out the Alliance’s mandates and manages its operations

The Urban Management Programme (UMP), established in 1986, is an effort by UN-Habitat and UNDP to strengthen the contribution that cities and towns in developing countries make towards economic growth, social development and the alleviation of poverty. UMP has “been able to promote innovative urban management practices, establish and strengthen municipal networks, and influence local and State urban policies and programmes. As a network of over 40 anchor and partner institutions covering 140 cities in 58 countries, it has been able to provide a platform for partners to engage in work related to emerging urban themes and processes. ...As a network of over 40 anchor and partner institutions covering 140 cities in 58 countries, it has been able to provide a platform for partners to engage in work related to emerging urban themes and processes.” (United Nations, 2012e)

The Sustainable Cities Program (SCP) was created in the early 1990 by UN-Habitat and the UN Environment Program (UNEP) “to build capacities in urban environmental planning and management. The program targets urban local authorities and their partners. It is founded on broad-based stakeholder participatory approaches. Currently the SCP and its sister program Localising Agenda 21 (LA21) operate in over 30 countries worldwide.” (United Nations, 2012a)

This broad array of examples of involvement of local governments in ten agencies in the UN System clearly reveals the growing understanding that efforts to cope with a broad range of issues on the broadening agenda of the UN System requires collaboration with not only the governments of States, but also the governments of local communities. At the same time, it reveals growing appreciation by local governments of the roles that they must play in global governance. This development is clearly revealed in documents and web sites of

both the UN System and organizations of local governments. But there is almost no recognition of it in public media and scholarship.

### **VIII. Regional and World Declarations and Conventions on Local Self-Government**

In 1985 the Council of Europe drafted the European Charter of Local Self-Government, which has now been ratified by over thirty members of the Council. The preamble concludes that local self-government "entails the existence of local authorities endowed with democratically constituted decision-making bodies and possessing a wide degree of autonomy with regard to their responsibilities, the ways and means by which those responsibilities are exercised and the resources required for their fulfillment." (Council of Europe, n.d.)

The European Charter has served as a model for a movement to develop a World Charter for Local Self-Government. (United Nations Centre for Human Settlements & World Associations of Cities and Local Authorities Coordination, 1998) Before the second UN Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), WACLAC called on the international community to develop a world charter of local self-government and presented this proposal to the Habitat II Conference. Following up on this initiative, a memorandum of understanding was signed in New York City in July 1997 between the UN-Habitat and WACLAC, which committed both parties to a world charter of local-self government. In 2004, at its founding conference, UCLG declared: "The adoption of a World Charter for Local Self-Government remains one of the key objectives of United Cities and Local Governments building on the work of its founding organizations and their partnership with UN-Habitat."<sup>2</sup>

### **IX. City Diplomacy**

A very important indication of the growing significance of local authorities in global governance was the scheduling of the First World Conference on City Diplomacy, 11-13 June 2008, hosted by the City of The Hague, The Netherlands. The rationale for the conference states that "Local governments play a key role in conflict prevention, peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction ... The conference examined situations where local government mediation has been crucial to creating the necessary conditions for agreements at a higher political level and the potential role of local governments in mediation efforts in on-going conflicts. ... Conflict dynamics and the huge interests involved, sometimes make it difficult to find solutions at the national or international level. Dialogue, understanding, integration and cooperation at the local level can sometimes help to create the conditions for agreements at a higher political level. ... We hope to get a better understanding of the factors for success or failure of local government peace-building initiatives." Participants stressed, in the final Declaration, "the importance of effective decentralization and local self-government as an essential condition for local governments to play their role in peace-building." (City Diplomacy, 2007) The Committee on City Diplomacy of United Cities and Local Governments (USLG) will take responsibility for the follow-up of what will be defined as the 'Agenda for the development of City Diplomacy'.

VNG International, an international cooperation agency of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities, has published *City Diplomacy: The Role of Local Governments in Conflict Prevention, Peace-building, Post-conflict Reconstruction*, a 213 page volume,

with financial support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands. The book has chapters on “Local governments building peace in eastern Croatia”, “City diplomacy for peace-building in the northern part of the Cauca, Colombia”, and “The Municipal Alliance for Peace in the Middle East (MAP)”<sup>3</sup>.

There is very significant diversity of participants in MAP. It was set up in June 2005, also at a conference in The Hague. It encourages municipal cooperation between Palestinian and Israeli local authorities, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palestinian> and through joint initiatives of the Association of Palestinian Local Authorities (APLA) and the Union of Local Authorities of Israel (ULAI). The Board of MAP is chaired by the Mayor of The Hague and is composed of the following members: Association of Palestinian Local Authorities (APLA), Union of Local Authorities of Israel (ULAI), UNDP Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People (UNDP/PAPP), United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), European Network of Local Authorities for Peace in the Middle East (ELPME), and the Cities of Hamar, Rome, Barcelona and Cologne. The Alliance secretariat has an office in Jerusalem. (United Nations, 2012f)

## X. Conclusion

Obviously there is growing awareness by many involved in local governance that maintaining, and extending, local democracy requires efforts that range from local to global contexts. Underlying this awareness is realization that policy problems important to local governments reach across a diversity of political borders and that efforts to seek solutions to these problems must extend to the borders of the problem.

We opened this article by stating that “Recent studies of the world relations of cities have added significantly to our growing understanding of the complexity of world relations.” This overview of the regional and global activities of regional and global organizations of local governments significantly extends our knowledge of this complexity in at least nine respects.

*First*, the *geographic range* of these organizations reaches from global, to global regions, to a diversity of more local regions.

*Second*, the *agendas of these organizations are quite diverse*. Some have an unlimited agenda, one has the agenda of large cities, and others have a specific issue focus such as environment and peace.

*Third*, the members of these organizations are *not only in the governments of towns and cities within states*, but also members of governmental organizations whose borders are defined by geographic factors (e.g. mountains, maritime), ethnic and cultural factors, and functional activities (e.g. recycling, preventing climate change, and promotion of local sustainable energy policies.).

*Fourth*, although these are primarily organizations of local governments, some have a diversity of other kinds of members, including academics, technical experts, civil society, trade unions, and business. The Arab Towns Organization has the broadest membership, including “any institution related to the activities of the organization”, and individuals who are “employed persons in the area who are interested in the work of the organization and its activities or researchers in the education and research organizations.”(General Assembly of the Arab Towns Organization, 2012) The Asia and Pacific organization (CITYNET) has Associate Members that include two cities outside the region (Lyon, France and Ancona, Italy). Relevant here is the Helsinki Process on Globalization and Democracy, a joint effort of the governments of Finland and Tanzania that was launched in 2003. It asserts that a diversity of stakeholders are required to solve global problems, including States, inter-State

organizations, municipalities, civil society, faith groups, business, trade unions, public policy research institutions, academia, the media and others. Chaired by the Foreign Ministers of Finland and Thailand, it has participants from the governments of Algeria, Brazil, Canada, Egypt, Hungary, Malaysia, Mexico, South Africa, Spain, Thailand and the United Kingdom. (Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2008)

Fifth, a significant indication of the increasing involvement of local governments in global governance is their *involvement in the UN System*. This clearly reveals the growing understanding that efforts to cope with a wide range of issues on the broadening agenda of the UN System requires collaboration with not only the governments of States, but also the governments of local communities. At the same time, it reveals growing appreciation by local governments of the roles that they must play in global governance.

*Sixth, a movement for a global standard for local self-government* has emerged out of the escalating regional and global involvements of local governments. A European Charter of Local Self-Government, developed by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, came into force in 1988. This has served as a model for a movement to develop a World Charter for Local Government. Both UN-Habitat and WACLAC support this movement. On the other hand, the Arab Towns Org. (ATO) and the Organization of Islamic Capitals and Cities (OICC) find it necessary to clearly state that they have no intention in interfering in the affairs of any State. This suggests that some perceive that this movement could be a challenge to the traditional role of States in global governance and find it necessary to deny it.

*Seventh, the movement that created United Cities and Local governments of Africa (UCLGA)* explicitly stated it had the *goal of creating a Pan-African association* that joined together States that were divided into three associations that reflected the colonial past, an Anglophone African Union of Local Authorities (AULA), the largely francophone Union des Villes Africaines (UVA), and the Portuguese Uniao dos Ciudades y Capitaes Lusofono Africana (UCCLA). Thus these organizations of local governments are attempting to remove the remaining influence of colonial State borders from global governance.

*Eighth, a very significant indication of the growing significance of local governments in global governance* was the scheduling of the *First World Conference on City Diplomacy*, 11-13 June 2008, hosted by the city of The Hague, The Netherlands. The rationale for the conference stated that “Local governments play a key role in conflict prevention, peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction. ... Conflict dynamics and the huge interests involved, sometimes make it difficult to find solutions at the national or international level. Dialogue, understanding, integration and cooperation at the local level can sometimes help to create the conditions for agreements at a higher political level.”(City Diplomacy, 2007) Participants stressed, in the final Declaration, “the importance of effective decentralisation and local self-government as an essential condition for local governments to play their role in peace-building.” (City Diplomacy, 2007) These assertions claim a role for local governments in global governance that many perceive to be the exclusive responsibility of the governments of States.

*Ninth, developments that we have reported suggest that it would be useful to compare the participation of local governments in Council of Europe (COE) governance with their involvement in global governance.* For example, this could help those involved in the UN System to decide whether they should continue to only widen the diversity of their involvements throughout the UN System, or should they also establish UN organizations similar to the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the COE. At the same time, the World Assembly of Cities and Local Authorities (WACLAC) might find it useful to compare their efforts to coordinate local government input in the UN System with those of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the COE.

Finally, it must be frankly recognized that available research greatly limits capacity for assessing the present impact of local governments on regional and global governance. On the other hand, by focusing on their growing involvement, we have provided extensive empirical evidence for theoretical questions raised by David Mitrany, Ernst Haas, Liebet Hooghe, Gary Marks, Bruno S. Frey and Reiner Eichenberger. At the same time, descriptions of these innovative locally-based efforts do challenge us to ponder more deeply their present significance, investigate further their impact, and evaluate their potential contribution to future global governance.

Certainly, the creative actions by many local governments that we have described offer challenging models to those throughout the world who declare their desire for the worldwide spread of democracy. This includes those State officials who espouse dedication to the spread of democracy beyond their borders. It is becoming ever more apparent that Robert A. Dahl and Edward R. Tufte had remarkable insight on this issue as early as 1973 when they wrote:

“Rather than conceiving of democracy as located in a particular kind of inclusive sovereign unit, we must learn to conceive of democracy spreading through a set of interrelated political systems ... none of which is sovereign.”  
(Dahl, 1973b, p. 135)

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Throughout this article I use the term "State" to refer to those governments recognized as sovereign by other States, in order to avoid confusing use of this term, particularly by people in States (like the USA) where sub-units of this State are called states. In order to avoid this confusion, the terms “nation” and "nation-state" are frequently used. But this creates more confusion, because many States are multi-nation states, and many nations flow across the borders of States. Also, the term "country" is sometimes used. Of course, further confusion results from the title United Nations, an organization comprised of "member-states." I address this problem in this, and other publications, by using the term "State" for so-called sovereign states and "state" for sub-unites of States.

<sup>2</sup> UN Centre for Human Settlements, 2000, "Mayors Support the World Charter for Local Self-Government and the Istanbul + 5 Process", CHS/0014. Nairobi: 9 May; “Progress report on the preparations of the proposed world charter of local self-government”, HS/C/PC.1/CRP. Nairobi: 7, 20 April; “Klaus Toepfer Launches UN Committee on Local Authorities: Innovation is the key to the future survival of cities", CHS/00/03. Nairobi: 24 January

<sup>3</sup> Arne Musch, Chris van der Valk, Aleandra Sizoo, Kian Tajbakhsh, eds., *City Diplomacy: The Role of local governments in conflict prevention, peace-building, post-conflict reconstruction*. (The Hague, Netherlands: VNG International, 2008); Martijn Klem, “Local Governments building Peace in Croatia”, 141-164; Chris van Hemert, “A Case study in City Diplomacy: The Municipal alliance for Peace in the Middle East”, 165-188; Andre Paz Ramos and Marianne Moor, “Local Democracy, the Tie That Binds US: City Diplomacy for Peace-building in the Northern Part of the Cauca, Colombia”, 123-140. See also Kenneth Bush, *Building Capacity for Peace and Unity: The Role of Local Government in PeaceBuilding*. (Ottawa, Canada: Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2004)

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