

Istanbul Declaration

Commitment to Local Action for Social Inclusion

We, the mayors and senior political representatives of cities from different regions of the world, meeting together in Istanbul, by occasion of the “Social Inclusion Summit” organized by ISKEP Project to show our commitment to local action for more inclusive cities.

In an increasingly urban and interdependent world, we will step up leadership, as we believe that local authorities have a pivotal role in the promotion of well-being for all as well as in the development of coordinated local strategies to promote social inclusion.

We, the local powers, play a significant role in guaranteeing populations a safe, fair, sustainable and inclusive environment for development of their capabilities and freedom to fulfil their human potential. Therefore, cities should be both architects and executors of strategies that foster social inclusion in the framework of sustainable development.

We acknowledge that there are many models of urbanization that respond to countries’ and cities’ diverse cultural, institutional and social conditions. Therefore, place-based policies respecting urban diversity and adaptable to different needs of urban areas and their inhabitants are needed. However, many characteristics of strategies for promotion of social inclusion are shared by us all and we want to co-operate in its development and implementation.

We are committed to fight social exclusion that is the process whereby certain individuals and groups are systematically blocked from acceding to positions that would allow them to subsist independently and occupy a position in society according to the shared values of the community.

Social inclusion is everywhere essential to the future success of citizens, businesses and communities. All residents have a right to have access to the opportunities that a modern society brings. By achieving better outcomes, people, families and communities become more resilient and are able to shape their own futures.

We commit ourselves to act in cooperation with relevant stakeholders and with the participation of inhabitants, for promotion of social inclusion, by adopting a participatory approach, empowering individuals, promoting awareness on factors of disadvantage, developing public services and acting in a sustainable way toward removing all kinds of barriers to employment.

We envision inclusive cities facilitating individual empowerment, building social cohesion, nurturing active citizenship, promoting economic and cultural prosperity, and laying the foundation for sustainable development. We want cities for all. Therefore, we are committed in action to change the situation, mitigating at our level of action the risks of social exclusion and the vulnerability of disadvantaged the groups.

We engage in acting toward social development of our cities, guided by the following principles:

- Equity - the fair distribution of resources, free from discrimination on the basis of age, disability, gender, socioeconomic background, race, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation as well as being a victim of any kind of violence
- Access - fair and equitable access to all services, so that no one falls below minimum standards that include adequate income, sufficient nutritious food, adequate and affordable housing, and sufficient clothing and all advantages of being a part of the social life in our city
- Participation - the opportunity to participate fully in the life of the city and the decision making that will determine our collective future
- Cohesion - the fostering of social trust, mutual care, and respect for diversity as the foundation for supportive communities.

We are conscious that the task of promoting more inclusive cities is beyond what a simple actor, whether a local or a national government, or any other, can do. Therefore, we commit ourselves to promote the coordination at all levels, in order to potentiate the impact of the action of all actors, creating synergies, avoiding redundancies and filling gaps left.

We, furthermore, call upon cities and regions in every part of the world to join efforts in putting forward a common approach to the common problem of poverty and social exclusion.

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UCLG Committee
on Social Inclusion,
Participatory Democracy
and Human Rights