



## **Panel 7:**

### **"Inclusive city, realities in the days of Covid-19"**

To kick the panel started, Giovanni ALLEGRETTI, the moderator provided a brief background on the inclusive policy, introduced during the outbreak of Covid-19. He next provided guidance about the intervention by the different panelists. Presentations were organized around the following items:

- 1- The ability to discuss and coordinate the vision of the inclusive and participatory system in the localities where they work;
- 2- To show how the emergence of Covid-19 has impacted on inclusion in their territory; the new types of exclusion identified;
- 3- To present the positive actions of participatory autonomous commitments implemented, in order to help the good practice of solidarity inclusion.

The floor was then turned to Dr. ANDOH Tania, Teacher-Researcher at the University Félix Houphouët-Boigny. During her presentation, she focused on the sociological realities in the city of Abidjan concerning the Covid-19 pandemic. Depending on time and space, people have developed different strategies to fight against the pandemic. However, as soon as the virus appeared in March 2020 in Côte d'Ivoire, there was a general panic and the disease became commonplace. She reports that depending on the neighbourhoods and categories of population, barrier measures

are no longer respected. According to the areas investigated, namely the University of Félix Houphouët-Boigny in Cocody, the Gouro market in Adjamé and the precarious district of Mossikro, the non-respect of barrier measures is perceived at the level of people's behaviour. Standards have been instituted at the institutional level (closing of schools, universities, public places), biomedical (wearing of masks, use of hydroalcoholic gel...). On the other hand, there are norms developed by the populations that are out of phase with what these institutional norms propose (self-medication, not wearing the mask correctly, etc.). From these investigated spaces and from the people consulted, perceptions have developed that can be listed as follows:

- "the virus is non-existent of the virus",
- "the disease has been manufactured and is of Chinese origin",
- It is a set-up by African states to benefit from financial resources,
- "it's a source of business",
- "promiscuity between powers is not a source of infection",
- "the virus can't stand the heat",
- "the virus does not attack the poor",
- "it's a disease that looks like malaria or the flu...",

To conclude, Dr ANDOH underlined the lack of attendance of the populations at the vaccination center at the University Félix Houphouët-Boigny of Cocody.

The second came from **Mrs. Laure DONWAHI**, Mayor of Mayo. She started her speech with a presentation of the commune of Mayo. It is a locality which is in the South-West of Côte d'Ivoire. It is an area of 80% agriculture and located 380 km from Abidjan with an area estimated at 200 km<sup>2</sup>. Its population is estimated at more than 30 000 inhabitants. To contain the disease in the town of Mayo, awareness campaigns were conducted through the radio and the various communities. These sensitizations focused on wearing masks, social distancing (as you know in Bete country, funerals are important in society, and it was necessary to contain this gathering of people, urging people to avoid gatherings). The impact at the commune

level was the reduction of taxes and the reduction of social cohesion actions. To remedy this situation, the Mayo town hall has developed digital technology. This has required a synergy of actions between the municipality's services and the concentrated and deconcentrated entities. Between the region and the communes, there were exchanges to face this epidemic locally. For Mrs. Laure DONWAHI, her municipality is not sufficiently integrated in the notion of an inclusive city. Indeed, according to her, in an inclusive city, all the population must have access to a job, urban transport, social housing and all forms of social discrimination must be banned. Mayo being a small town, for it to be an inclusive city, it will require a strong involvement of the State because the town hall does not have all the levers for the development of this district.

The third presentation was made by Mr. Yapo Jean-Jacques, Director General of the Union of Cities and Municipalities of Côte d'Ivoire (UVICOCI), who reminded us that inclusion is not only a policy but also a participatory action. Going back to the words of Mrs. Laure DOWAWI, mayor of Mayo, her municipality could not be an inclusive city in the current state of affairs. Inclusion means allowing all municipalities, large, medium and small, to express themselves and to have access to all participatory policies at our level. Inclusion must take into account the municipalities at all levels (large, medium and small). Inclusion means that all populations are equal and should be treated the same. If there is a basic service that must be provided to the population, all populations must benefit from it and there must be no exclusion, but everything must be done in equality and equity so that all social strata have access to the same service in the same territory.

The fourth and last intervention, was from Mr. Diego Fernandez Varas representing Annabelle Bretton (deputy to the local democracy of the city of Grenoble) prevented panelist. Mr Fernandez made a point of reading the speech that Mrs Bretton should have given to this panel. This speech was a sharing of the

experience of the city of Grenoble in the participative inclusion in the management of the city. Mr. Fernandez emphasized from the outset that the Covid-19 crisis has reinforced the gap between leaders and citizens. For him, the management of the health crisis in France was radical. During this period, it was decided to maintain the idea of the participatory budget, which was well established before the crisis. It was necessary not to abandon the tools of participation, especially the well-functioning creative participation. During the lockdown, the city of Grenoble had to adapt to foster participatory inclusion through meetings where people could exchange on issues and initiatives. However, the panelist continued, human and digital exclusions are also to be noted. To overcome these exclusions, mechanisms have been put in place through reception centres for people who do not have access to the internet. Returning to the question of the participatory budget, Mr Fernandez said that it allowed the inclusion of all inhabitants of all nationalities and from 16 years old. In addition to the example of the participatory budget, the city of Grenoble has also instituted workcamps open to the public in working-class neighbourhoods. According to the panelist, these are work sites open to the public, spaces for the mobilisation of inhabitants and municipal agents to transform the living environment in the neighbourhood. It is a form of contributory democracy, a community democracy in which knowledge and skills are shared. Finally, to conclude, the panelist also pointed out another form of social inclusion, the workshops and projects where the inhabitants, selected by lot, give their recommendations on specific public policies.

In conclusion, Mr. Fernandez noted that the Covid-19 health crisis has revealed opportunities to rethink citizen participation beyond this crisis.

After the intervention of the various panelists, exchanges with the public present were opened. Thus, five (5) questions were addressed to the panelists and one (1) contribution. The answers to these questions included recommendations for

the proper implementation of the practice of the inclusive city in Côte d'Ivoire. Thus, in his first recommendation, Mr. Yapo said that the State should create inclusion by putting the human being at the centre of its concerns, and this is possible if the mayor has sufficient means. His second recommendation on the environment is that the State should equip the communes with landfills and equipment for the removal and transport of household waste. His third recommendation concerns the fact that, in addition to citizen participation, the social economy of solidarity, which puts the human being at the heart of its action, should be taken into account. As a last recommendation, he underlined the fact that there are many other issues that require the integration of all the components of the city to be solved. Then the floor was given to the Mayor of Mayo. She proposed as a first recommendation, the setting up of sanitary and school infrastructures necessary for a growing population in the cities. Her second recommendation was that civil society (NGOs) should play its role in the inclusive city. All the different components of society should be involved in the management plan of the participatory city. Above all, she recommended the involvement of men in the development actions of their city. Her third recommendation concerned the introduction of new mentalities through education and communication. According to the panelist, people must take their responsibility in the inclusive city. To conclude, Mrs. DONWAHI pointed out that it was necessary to adapt, to take into account cultural and community differences in order to be in phase with the SDGs. It is in this last recommendation that Dr. ANDOH Tania's thought fits in, for whom in this inclusion, it is necessary to take into account the culture, the realities of each society but also the endogenous strategies that each population develops. She also recommends local initiatives in the management of COVID-19.

To wrap up the panel, a last recommendation was delivered by Mr Diego Fernandez. Based on the case of the city of Grenoble, the panelist recommended a

good implementation of the inclusive city policy, taking into account the level of perception of inclusion by the populations in order to model the forecasts.