



#CitiesAreListening

CITIES ARE LISTENING



metropolis ●

UN HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE



December 14, 2020
14:00-15:00 (CET)

IICLD Swedish International
Centre for Local Democracy

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an important impact in citizens all over the world. Many of the procedures that guarantee local democracy have, as have many other aspects of urban life, been interrupted and the states of emergency have, in many cases been accompanied by top-down policies and enhance authoritarian powers. In many cases, local governments are making democracy a key part of their response to the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, and have become key actors in leading their communities through this crisis.

The experience on **Covid-19: Lessons Learnt for Local Democracy** will build on the Live Learning Experience on Local Democracy, in which local and regional leaders shared the immediate effects of the pandemic.

As part of the #CitiesAreListening experience, it will aim to develop a dialogue in which mayors, governors, and representatives of Academia discussing the challenges faced, the lessons learnt, and the way forward for local and regional governments to secure the protection of local democracy and harness innovative solutions to strengthen local governance as a means to build towards the **pact for the future of humanity**, in which communities are considered in the decision-making processes.

The results from the one-hour exchange will allow us to develop joint advocacy, enhancing our knowledge around the state of local democracy and build the case for the **pact for government**: the axis of the pact for the future that centers on protecting and enhancing democracy and building on the next generation of human rights.

This panel discussion will discuss lessons learnt from local governments' responses to the Covid-19 and inspire the way forward.

Guiding Questions

Equity/inclusion

The coronavirus is affecting people unequally, already vulnerable groups may have less opportunities to access information, healthcare, medicine, and income opportunities. These are important aspects in the coronavirus response. How local governments responded to the needs of vulnerable groups during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Citizen participation

The covid-19 virus naturally poses challenges for the physical meeting of citizens and has impacted the ability for the citizens in your respective municipality to partake in decision making processes. How are citizens taking part in local decision-making processes that affects them?

Transparency

Extraordinary decisions and measures need to be taken to prevent the spread of Covid-19. These measures often require citizen trust and engagement, it is therefore vital to make information that underpin the decision-making accessible for the citizens. How are citizens getting information regarding the decision-making in your municipality?

Corrupt practices can exacerbate the responses of local governments to the Covid-19 pandemic. How are local governments acting to prevent the misuse of power for private gain?

Possibility to demand accountability

How are citizens expressing their opinions on decisions taken to limit the spread of the virus?

How are they demanding accountability of their leaders regarding the decisions linked to the covid-19 response? What are the formal and informal (i.e. protests, gossip) channels used to hold local governments accountable?

Panelists:

- Anders Knape, President of the Swedish Association of Municipalities and Regions
- Emilia Saiz, Secretary General of UCLG
- James Manor, Professor Emeritus of School of Advanced Study, University of London
- Imen Ouardani, vice-mayor of Sousse

Moderator: Ana Maria Vargas, Research Director Swedish International Centre for Local Democracy